

Problem Solvers 8 Invisible Braces

Synonyms: Aligners, Invisalign, Ortho Clear, (Red, White and Blue), Essix appliance therapy, Six-month orthodontics.

Meta Description: Many companies exist that help people to straighten their teeth without use of traditional metal braces. You can learn when these are the most useful in this article.

Article Headline: Invisible braces are a wonderful treatment to help people with certain dental problems but they may not be appropriate for everyone.

Article DEK: Invisible braces are marketed to teens, adults and anyone that requires braces but for whom metal braces are undesirable. These modalities are constantly being modified but may not always provide ideal results if severe crowding, spacing, or rotations exist.

Traditionally orthodontics has involved the use of retainers or appliances called functional jaw orthopedics to influence skeletal growth patterns that have given people bad bites. Braces are used and may be combined with extractions to create space and provide a way to line up and idealize a person's bite.

Braces can involve metal or clear brackets and will allow a wire to be placed that will allow forces to be placed on teeth to align them.

Invisible braces attempt to do the same thing but instead of using a wire to give the teeth a "path" to follow-they use plastic with spaces to push teeth where they want them to go. The principle is to use take an impression, photographs and x-rays and after sending a prescription to the lab, the teeth can be moved a little bit, then the scanner will fabricate a mouthguard, then the scanner will move the teeth a bit more and make another aligner and so on until the desired objective is reached. These movements occur gradually over time so as to not cause discomfort or root shortening.

When rotations are required on teeth then buttons made out of composite resin-tooth colored filling-are placed on to the teeth to act as a fulcrum and grip for the tooth to help the plastic perform the task that is needed.

When are invisible braces best? When teeth need simple movements and there is slight spacing these appliances can be ideal.

How long to they take? Well there are express or quick cases, which could take 4-12 months, and comprehensive cases that can take 2 or more years.

When should I use traditional braces?

When people have severe underbites or overbites with rotations of teeth that are 40 degrees or more, than traditional braces may provide a quicker, and more esthetic result.

What determines the outcome? Many dentists that use these aligners have had experience and understand the limitations of using plastic to align teeth. They will probably explain the advantages, disadvantages, benefits, risks and alternative treatments to you before you make up your mind.

How much do invisible braces cost? The cost will depend on the amount of change needed. The costs to make these aligners can be significantly higher than the cost of the wires and brackets so the cost may be very similar for invisible braces as compared to traditional orthodontics.

Why are traditional braces better for some cases? The ability to use wires, springs, coils, TADS or temporary anchorage devices, Sure Smile, and other modalities allows the dentist to control tooth movements in 3 planes. That means that tip, torque, angulation of teeth can be controlled in 3 dimensions as opposed to plastic aligners that rely primarily on tipping to move teeth (two dimensions).

Can clear aligners be used when extractions are needed?

Yes they can but to close spaces with clear plastic can take a lot longer and often require cutting windows in the aligners, placing buttons and rubber bands to help move teeth. This is more difficult to do with plastic than traditional braces.

Does it always work?

If the diagnosis and treatment planning is done carefully, the case should be able to accomplish the desired goals. It should always be explained to people that there is a certain unpredictability to tooth movement. If clear aligners or invisible braces don't provide the desired outcome, additional treatment may be required in the future.