



Orthodontics
Australia



An Expert's Guide to Clear Aligner Treatment

What you should know about
Invisalign® treatment

The clear alternative to braces



Did you know that roughly one in every four orthodontic patients in Australia is an adult?

Orthodontic treatment has become more effective and discreet than ever before, with clear aligner options such as Invisalign®, sometimes referred to as 'invisible braces', becoming more popular with patients of all ages. These customised, clear plastic, removable "aligners" are a subtle way of guiding your teeth into the right position to create a beautiful smile.



What can clear aligners treat?



Clear aligners are suitable for responsible adults and adolescents, and can manage a wide range of orthodontic issues such as crooked, gappy or protruding teeth.

Whilst there are some limitations to what they can correct, clear aligners can be used by experienced orthodontists to treat more complicated orthodontic problems, often in conjunction with other treatment methods.

There are some instances, particularly in adults, where clear aligners may be a better treatment option than traditional braces.



How do clear aligners work?

With clear aligners, your entire course of treatment is programmed from the beginning.

1

After an initial consultation, your orthodontist will either take an intra-oral scan or an impression of your teeth. These will be used to create a series of slightly different custom aligners. Unlike braces, which are affixed to your teeth, clear aligners are removable and can be taken out for eating, drinking and brushing.



2

Small white resin bumps, or 'attachments', will be affixed to some teeth, to help the aligners grip properly and shift your teeth into position. The attachments remain on your teeth for the duration of your treatment.



3

You wear each one for 20 to 22 hours a day for one to two weeks, before moving onto the next aligner as your teeth move in small increments.



4

The total number of aligners you'll need will depend on the complexity of the issues being treated. Typically 20-30 aligners are needed, meaning the average treatment duration is around 12 to 18 months. However, some patients with very minor problems will complete treatment in as little as 14 weeks.

20-30 Aligners



How are clear aligners different to braces?



Clear aligners

Clear aligners, such as Invisalign®, are transparent pieces of custom-moulded plastic that sit over the teeth and gradually shift them over time.



Lingual braces

Lingual braces function like traditional braces but are bonded to the back of the teeth instead of the front so no one will be able to see them! They are the only truly invisible treatment option, so if you're looking for a discreet treatment then lingual braces are definitely worth considering.



Modern braces

Modern tooth-coloured or clear ceramic braces are visible but much subtler than traditional braces, and thanks to advances in orthodontic technology, they're smaller than ever before. They're the cheapest 'cosmetic' orthodontic option out there, so if you're looking for a cost-effective fix, ceramic braces are a good choice.



How do I care for my clear aligners?



Clear aligners can achieve fantastic results if you are disciplined and follow your orthodontist's guidance.

Advice given will include:

- Wearing each set of aligners for around 20-22 hours a day for 1-2 weeks at a time
- Removing your aligners when eating or drinking to avoid them becoming misshapen or discoloured
- Cleaning them regularly as demonstrated by your orthodontist
- Attending regular follow up appointments every 6-8 weeks with your orthodontist to ensure the treatment is progressing correctly



How much do clear aligner treatments cost?



It's difficult to say exactly how much clear aligner treatment will cost, as it depends on the issues being corrected and the duration of your treatment.

However, as a ballpark figure, a six-month treatment with 10-14 aligners may cost approximately \$4,000 to \$7,000, while a full 12-18+ month treatment is likely to cost around \$8,000 to \$10,000.

This investment will include the orthodontist's expertise in planning your treatment, the full series of clear aligners you'll need, a number of regular check-ups with your orthodontist, plus follow-up treatment to ensure you maintain your perfect new smile!

Also covered in this cost is the expertise of your orthodontist and their team of qualified professionals, who are monitoring and guiding your treatment to make sure you get the best results.



Who should fit my clear aligners?

Just like braces, clear aligners such as Invisalign® are a form of complex orthodontic treatment, which involves moving most of the teeth in the jaws and changing your bite. While some dentists offer clear aligner treatment, they do not have extensive training in the field of orthodontics.

Only a fully qualified specialist orthodontist has the training, experience and expert knowledge to provide the best results from your clear aligner treatment.



You can use our **Find an Orthodontist** tool to find your nearest registered orthodontist.





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Orthodontics Australia is the public information and advice channel for the Australian Society of Orthodontists.

Our blog and social media platforms have been designed to assist your research efforts and help you understand the difference between an orthodontist and a dentist, your orthodontic treatment options, the results you can expect and the journey along the way.

Of course, we can help you find registered orthodontists too with no referral needed! We hope you find this resource helpful and it gives you the confidence to take the next step in achieving the smile you've always wanted.

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