How do I clean my aligners?

It is important that you brush your teeth after each meal before reinserting your aligners. To clean the aligners it is recommended to use cold water with a toothbrush and liquid soap. You can also purchase special cleaning tablets to help with this.

How long does treatment take?

Treatment times vary for each individual. Treatment can last between 6-24 months depending on the severity of your bite, but for some people it may take longer. If you do not wear your aligner as instructed, then treatment will take more time.

What happens once my clear aligners treatment is completed?

When treatment is completed you will be asked to wear retainers to keep your teeth straight. Retainer wear is lifelong. Your orthodontist can discuss this with you in more detail.

Is clear aligner treatment available on the NHS?

Clear aligners are not routinely provided on the NHS. Depending on the complexity of your case and your age you may be eligible for fixed braces, but a clear aligner is likely to require private funding.

Are there alternatives to clear aligner treatment?

For those who are not suitable for aligners, other options may be available. A traditional fixed brace may be a more appropriate treatment for your smile or a lingual appliance, which sits on the tongue side of the teeth, may be available privately.

Remember

- **Clear aligners are an orthodontic appliance to move the teeth**
- **Aligners may not be suitable for complex cases**
- **There are risks involved in all orthodontic treatment**
- **To achieve the desired result you must follow your orthodontist's instructions**
- **After treatment you must still wear a retainer for the teeth to be kept in the desired position**

NHS choices orthodontics
www.nhs.uk/conditions/orthodontics

This leaflet has been produced with guidance from the Plain English Campaign and British Dyslexia Association to make it easier for you to read

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Patient Information Leaflet

ALIGNER

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BRITISH ORTHODONTIC SOCIETY

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What are clear aligners?

Aligners are a removable dental appliance made of clear plastic. They are used to gradually move teeth to straighten them.

When can they be used?

Aligners can be used to straighten the teeth and improve the bite. They may not always be suitable but an orthodontist can advise you.

How do clear aligners work?

Your orthodontist works with a laboratory who will straighten the teeth often on a computer model. They then make a sequence of aligners, that are changed every 1-2 weeks, which will gradually move your teeth to the desired position.

What are the risks of using an aligner?

The risks of clear aligners are similar to traditional orthodontic treatment. These include soreness of the teeth, irritation of the gums, failure to achieve the desired result, and return of your teeth to their previous positions if you do not wear your retainers. Moving your teeth will often shorten their roots slightly, and if you do not keep your teeth clean the tooth surface is at risk of decay. Please ask your orthodontist if you would like more details.

Will I need to have teeth extracted?

In cases where your teeth are very crowded, teeth may need to be extracted to achieve a nice smile. If a small amount of space is needed to straighten your teeth, this can be achieved by filing the sides of some of the teeth (interproximal reduction). This makes the teeth slightly smaller so that they have more space to be aligned. However, most cases do not require either extractions or filing.

Before Treatment

After Treatment

How often do I wear the aligners?

During treatment, you should wear your aligners all of the time except when eating, drinking anything other than plain water or brushing (more than 22 hours a day).

How often will I need to see my orthodontist during my treatment?

You will usually need to see your orthodontist every 6-12 weeks to monitor your treatment progress.

Are the aligners uncomfortable?

It is normal to feel some minor temporary discomfort for the first few days of wearing each new aligner. This is due to gentle continuous pressure used to move the teeth.

Will my speech be affected?

Speech can sometimes be affected when you start wearing aligners for the first few days whilst your mouth adjusts to them. This usually resolves after 3-5 days.

Attachments (arrows)

Are the aligners visible?

The aligners are made of a clear plastic material, without any metal wires, so they are not very noticeable when you wear them. You may be asked to wear attachments or elastics with your aligners, which can be more visible.
Attachments are small amounts of tooth-coloured filling material attached to your teeth to help the aligner to move them.