

The Advantages of Invisalign for Beautiful Teeth

One only needs to look at the performance of Align Technology, Inc. (ALGN) over the past three years to know that they must be doing something right with their product, Invisalign. Invisalign corrects orthodontic misalignment of teeth with a series of clear plastic aligners that are custom fabricated for each individual patient. The clear aligners fit over the teeth and apply a gentle pressure to move each tooth into its correct position as directed by an orthodontist.

INVISALIGN HISTORY AND IMPROVEMENTS

As an alternative to orthodontic braces, Invisalign has been available as a treatment option to patients since May 2000. Invisalign was met with much enthusiasm from orthodontists when it first became available, but over the first several years, orthodontists began to realize that it was limited in its ability to correct most orthodontic problems. During this time, many orthodontists ended up placing traditional braces on approximately half of patients that were initially treated with Invisalign because Invisalign had failed to achieve the re-

ADVANCES IN ORTHODONTISTS' INGENUITY

Orthodontists that have continued to work with Invisalign have also learned to resolve problems previously thought uncorrectable with Invisalign. For example, severe rotations of teeth (greater than 30 degrees) can be corrected by bonding traditional attachments to the lingual (back side) of teeth where they cannot be seen. Overbites now can be corrected as well by placing precision cuts in the aligners for elastics. Orthodontists can also build additional features into the aligners such as bite turbos to correct deepbites or overlapping front teeth.

INVISALIGN VERSUS BRACES

Beyond the obvious fact that Invisalign provides a virtually invisible option for the correction of orthodontic misalignment, patients have also realized additional benefits from treatment with Invisalign versus traditional braces or lingual braces (braces placed on the back side of teeth). First, the aligners can be removed, which makes it easier for patients to maintain substantially better oral hygiene than is typically observed with patients in braces. And while hard and sticky foods must not be eaten with braces because of

the risk of breaking them off of the teeth, with Invisalign there are no dietary restrictions because the aligners can be removed while eating. This also means patients have to make less visits to the orthodontist to repair broken braces and poking wires. Braces also



sults desired by patients. Frustrated, many more orthodontists gave up on Invisalign entirely and stopped offering it as an option to patients. Then in 2010, Invisalign hired a new team of engineers that made improvements to the product such as SmartForce features for more predictable tooth movements and G3 attachments, which made it possible to treat more complex orthodontic problems. Since then, Invisalign has continued to make improvements with G4 attachments and the recent release of a new polymer material for aligner fabrication called SmartTrack which has further increased the predictability of tooth movements and has made a night and day difference with patient comfort in placing and removing aligners.

require adjustment by the orthodontist every 4-6 weeks. With Invisalign, there are less frequent and less time consuming visits to the orthodontist because the aligners do not require adjustment. Typically patients with Invisalign are seen every 8-12 weeks only to ascertain that the teeth are aligning as predicted.

Not all orthodontic problems can be corrected with Invisalign. Sometimes traditional braces are still needed. But with the recent advances in Invisalign and increasing ingenuity from orthodontists, many more patients can benefit from orthodontic correction with Invisalign than was previously possible. If you have been told in the past that the misalignment of your teeth cannot be corrected with Invisalign, contact an orthodontist today for a contemporary evaluation.

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Dr. Russell Verbic attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and received a B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering with Distinction in 1999. After working for several years as a research engineer in the aerospace industry, Dr. Verbic went back to school and received a D.D.S. from the University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Dentistry. During his time at the College of Dentistry, he received the highest awards for academic excellence conferred upon a student by both the Illinois State Dental Society and Chicago Dental Society. Following graduation from dental school, Dr. Verbic attended a three-year residency at the University of Illinois at Chicago and received a specialty certificate in Orthodontics and a M.S. degree in Oral Science. He is a member of the American Dental Association, American Association of Orthodontists, Illinois Society of Orthodontists, and Illinois State Dental Society.

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