

## Invisalign Instructions

Congratulations on your decision to use Invisalign orthodontics to straighten your teeth! It is important for you to understand your treatment and responsibilities to ensure a successful result.

Invisalign works by using a series of clear plastic “aligners” that apply a light, constant force to your teeth. This force is designed to move your teeth into their correct positions. Since the appliance is removable, it is critical for you to wear them full time (20-22 hours/day). Remember, the aligners will only work if they are worn. Remove your aligners only if you are eating or drinking hot fluids such as tea or coffee. Store your aligners in the cases that we provide whenever they are not in your mouth. Never wrap them in a paper towel as they tend to be thrown out. Dr. Filippone will usually give you several aligners at each appointment and let you know when to change from your old aligners to new ones. Typically, aligners are changed every two to four weeks. Save all of your old aligners, even when you are through wearing them, as they may be useful if slight shifting occurs in the future.

When you first wear your aligners you may experience some discomfort as they apply pressure to your teeth. Usually, this discomfort only lasts for several days. For relief, you may take Tylenol or Advil (whatever you usually take for a headache). If your aligners do not completely fit when you first place them into your mouth, you may find it helpful to clench your teeth into the aligners for the first several days. This will help to stimulate tooth movement and “seat” your teeth into the aligners. Aligners often feel looser as you get closer to changing to new ones. Never change the aligners before you are instructed to do so. Changing aligners too soon may slow your treatment progress, and it may cause damage to your aligners or your teeth.

Because the aligners cover the biting surfaces of your teeth, you may initially find that only your back teeth touch as you bite down. You will also notice that your bite will change throughout the course of treatment. These changes may be disconcerting at first. However, you will quickly get used to them. Within several months, after completing your entire treatment, your bite will “settle” and the teeth should feel perfectly normal upon biting.

In addition to the aligners Dr. Filippone may have planned to place some attachments on your teeth. Attachments are tooth colored material that is bonded to your teeth which are designed to help retain the aligners and to assist in certain tooth movements. The attachments are meant to stay in place for the duration of treatment. Sometimes an attachment may come loose. If this happens, it is not an emergency. However, please call our office (703-815-0127) to schedule a visit to have it replaced within a week. Dr. Filippone will remove your attachments when your treatment is complete. Please consult with Dr. Filippone if you ever notice any problem with your aligner, or its fit, or if it breaks, or becomes distorted.

Dr. Filippone will let you know if he has planned a procedure called “interproximal reduction”. Interproximal reduction is the selected removal of a tiny amount of tooth mass designed to create space for tooth alignment. This procedure will often help to avoid the extraction of any of your permanent teeth. If this procedure is necessary, keep in mind that we will never remove more than .5mm between any two teeth (or .25mm per tooth surface).

It is important that you properly care for your aligners. Be careful when you place and remove your aligners. Clean your aligners with a toothbrush and a very small amount of toothpaste and room temperature water. Clean your aligners three times a day when you brush your teeth. Tooth brushing and flossing is also very important. Aligners will hold plaque and bacteria against the teeth which may cause cavities and gum disease without meticulous care. Remember to see your general dentist at least every six months while undergoing Invisalign treatment for regular cleanings and so that they can monitor the health of your teeth and gums.

During the course of treatment, if you need to have a filling or a tooth restored, please bring your aligner to your general dentist and have him/her attempt to “fit” the filling to the aligner. If that does not work, new Invisalign impressions and new aligner fabrication may be necessary.

Occasionally, extra aligners are necessary to “detail” your case after we have finished with your initial set. This is called case refinement. There will be no charge to you if case refinement is necessary.

Please keep your regular visits to our office. Failure to follow the above protocol and/or failure to keep regular visits may result in prolonged or unsuccessful treatment and additional fees.

Retainers will be fabricated for you after your treatment is complete. It is important to remember that retainers will need to be worn at 24 hours/7 days per week to hold the results that are achieved. Your teeth may move throughout your entire life (with or without orthodontic treatment). Therefore, retention is a long term commitment.

We are here to help. Do not hesitate to contact us if you ever have any questions or concerns. We are dedicated to helping you achieve the healthy and beautiful smile that you desire!