



Congratulations, you are now on your way to straighter teeth! This manual answers most of the frequently asked questions regarding Invisalign treatment. Please take a few minutes to completely read it through on the day that treatment starts. Understanding these key concepts will make a difference in how your treatment proceeds. We are always here to answer your questions, and we look forward to working with you!

## **22 Hours a Day**

The first goal that we set for you is to get used to wearing your aligners. Some people prefer to begin wearing their aligners full time immediately and others like to begin more slowly. There is no right way. However, the goal is for you to be wearing your aligners full time (except while eating and brushing) after the first week. It is very important that you wear your aligners “full time”, or 22 hours per day. Taking out your aligner for a 4 hour period sets you back 72 hours in progress towards the end goal of straighter teeth!

## **General Soreness and Speech**

Most people experience some soreness for a day or two after starting each new stage. This is normal. It is a sign that the aligners are working and moving your teeth to their final destination. On rare occasions, aligners may temporarily affect your speech slightly. However, as your tongue gets used to having the aligners in the mouth, any minor disturbance in normal speech caused by the aligners will disappear within the first week. Most people have no problems with their speech at all.

## **Before Leaving the Office**

There are routine steps that we ask you to take prior to leaving the office after each office visit:

1. Using your finger and tongue, check that your new aligners are comfortable and that they fit without rocking. We want the aligners to be tight enough so that they do not fall out while speaking, but loose enough so that they may be taken in and out by you. They should have a definite “click into place” feel to them. Make sure that you understand how to remove and replace your aligners correctly.
2. Make sure you understand what you are to do until your next visit. Typically, you will change your aligners every two weeks, but this may change from person to person.
3. Always schedule your next appointment before leaving the office. Waiting for 2 weeks after an appointment to schedule your office visit complicates the scheduling process. Postponing appointments is a common contributor to extended treatment.
4. Make sure that all of your questions about treatment are answered. Treatment goes better when everyone understands the treatment process.



## **Eating and Potential Harm to your Aligners**

There are no restrictions on what you may eat. However, we recommend that your aligners be removed while eating and placed into the carry case that was provided to you. Most aligners are lost while eating in restaurants. Lost and broken appliances cause delays in treatment, extra office visits and additional expenses. Except for water, we recommend that you do not drink while wearing aligners to avoid formation of cavities or stains, and warping of the aligners with extremely hot drinks.

## **Wearing and Using Your Aligners**

### *Aligner Insertion:*

1. Make sure you have the correct aligner— upper for top teeth and lower for bottom teeth.
2. To help you avoid confusion each aligner is engraved with your unique case #, a “U” for upper and “L” for lower, followed by the stage number.
3. You may insert either the upper or lower aligner first. When inserting each aligner, gently push the aligners over the front teeth. Then, apply equal pressure, using your fingertips, to your left and right molars (back teeth) until the aligner snaps into place. **DO NOT BITE** your aligners into position. This will damage them.
4. Minor discrepancies between the new aligner and the current tooth position are normal since the teeth need time to conform to the new aligner position. However, if there is a problem with fit, do not proceed to the next aligner stage until you are seen in our office.
5. Your aligners have been programmed to reduce from 200 grams of force upon first insertion to 40 grams within 48 hours. For ease of removal, we recommend that new stages be placed after the last evening brushing and not removed until the next morning. By that time the force is down to 100 grams and the aligners will be easier to remove.

### *Aligner Removal:*

1. Using your fingers, start on one side at the molars (back teeth) and slowly work your way around to the other side.
2. To help prevent damage, avoid unnecessary removal.
3. **DO NOT** use any sharp object to remove your aligners.
4. Immediately rinse the aligners with water, shake off excess water, and store your aligners.
5. As you proceed to each new stage, all old stages are to be saved in their corresponding zip lock packet until treatment is completed. In the rare event that an aligner should break, please call our office. We may advise you to move to the next aligner or go back to a previous aligner depending on how long you have worn the broken aligner.
6. It is rare that an aligner is unable to be removed. A #2 crochet hook from a hobby & craft store will assist in removing the aligner if you have short fingernails. Call our office for assistance if needed.

### *Daily Care and Maintenance of Aligners:*

1. Clean your aligners prior to each insertion. Use a soft tooth brush with toothpaste and water.
2. Rinse each aligner thoroughly with water after each cleaning.
3. **DO NOT** use denture cleaners to clean aligners or soak them in mouthwash. These products can damage the surface of the aligner, causing it to become dull and more visible.



# ZAHNER DENTAL

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## Oral Hygiene and Diet

Food left on the teeth and gum line after eating feeds bacteria which cause plaque to form. Plaque causes cavities (tooth decay), decalcification (white marks on teeth) and gingivitis or gum disease (swollen, puffy, red, overgrown or bleeding gums). Since the expansion retainers fit against the teeth and gums, it is important to keep the retainers as clean as the mouth. The following are recommended guidelines and tools to be used in cleaning your gums and teeth:

To maintain healthy teeth while wearing orthodontic appliances and to reduce the possibility of decay, decalcification and inflammation of the gums, please follow these recommendations:

1. The best preventive measure is excellent oral hygiene. This includes brushing with fluoride toothpaste for at least two minutes after breakfast and before going to bed. A regular soft bristled tooth brush will do well, but we highly recommend the Sonicare electric toothbrush.
2. Fluoride is a very important part of the prevention program. Fluoride will attach to any weakened enamel and strengthen it. We recommend that after brushing with fluoride toothpaste and rinsing, before going to bed, rinse with a fluoride mouthwash. Hold for 60 seconds then spit, but do not rinse. The idea is to leave a small amount of fluoride on your teeth all night. This nightly light fluoride treatment will help prevent decay, decalcification and gingivitis.
3. Minimize eating foods with high fructose corn syrup, sucrose and other sugars. All candy is in this category as well as many juices. The bacteria that cause decay, decalcification and gingivitis utilize the carbohydrates as their food.
4. Minimize or avoid soft drinks. There is strong evidence that the acid from carbonated soft drinks contributes to the breakdown of enamel.
5. It is very important to continue with your regular professional cleaning with our office.