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# The Ins and Outs of Invisalign

by **Andrea B. DeLurgio, DDS, MSD**



Each year many people find that they need braces to help treat the alignment of their teeth. The first thing that pops into most people's mind is a mouth full of metal, which is not something they want! This is especially true for those millions of adults who would like to straighten their teeth but don't want to walk around with traditional metal braces, calling attention to what they are doing. The good news is that there is a better option, called Invisalign, and it's one that most people love.

## Invisible Braces

One of the biggest things that people don't like about traditional metal braces is that they are so obvious. It is hard to not notice someone having a mouth full of metal, allowing everyone to know your business and that you are undergoing treatment. But with Invisalign, the treatment essentially goes unnoticed because they have been designed to be invisible.

The Invisalign braces were first available in 1998 and have been popular ever since because they provide a more comfortable and private treatment option. To use Invisalign braces, people see the orthodontist for an exam and fitting. The treatment uses custom made plastic aligners that are clear and fit right over the teeth, so they are not noticeable. The aligners are removable, as well, giving people the freedom to eat what they want and continue brushing and flossing their teeth as they normally would.

In order for the company to make the custom fit aligners, they make an impression of the patient's mouth, create a bite image, and then create a series of aligners that take into account the person's prescription for correction. The patient wears each aligner for about two weeks, changing them as they progress through the treatment.

Another reason that the Invisalign braces are so popular is because people find them so much more comfortable. With wire braces, people usually find that the wires and brackets irritate and poke their mouths. However, the Invisalign aligners are made of a comfortable plastic, so there is no poking. It is recommended that they are worn for 20-22 hours per day, giving you the option to take a short break each day. With traditional metal braces, there are no such break options, as they are permanently on until removed by the doctor.



### Getting Started

For those that have less than the perfect smile they would like to see when they look in the mirror, they no longer have to be ashamed and try to hide their mouth when they talk or smile. There are many adults who are seizing the opportunity to straighten their teeth, now that invisible braces are an option.

To get started, the best route to take is to schedule a consultation with an orthodontist to make sure that you are an ideal candidate for Invisalign. Most people are, but the orthodontist is a specialist in treating tooth and jaw alignment and will ensure that the best treatment option is discussed.

A straighter, more confident smile is within reach. For most adults, Invisalign takes about 12 months of treatment. So within a year, you can have a perfect smile. With Invisalign, there is no reason to dodge getting your teeth fixed. Today the treatment is virtually pain free, convenient, and discrete. It all comes down to when you are ready to get started!

- Dr. DeLurgio

### Costs and Financing

Patients who prefer the idea of the Invisalign braces over the traditional metal ones will find that there is a higher cost associated. The national average price for Invisalign is around \$7,000. The price is higher due to the technology and process used to make the aligners. Yet most people find that the fee is balanced by the fact that they feel more confident and secure in their treatment decision when they are wearing invisible braces. This is especially true for those that are in the workplace, as they don't want to draw attention to their treatment.

There are several ways that people can go about paying for the Invisalign braces, including checking to see if their insurance covers all or part of it, as many do, speaking with orthodontists about in-house financing options, and using the Flexible Spending Account that they may have with their employer.

When considering the higher costs associated with the Invisalign option, people need to also take into account that they will not spend as much time visiting their orthodontist with this treatment. With wire braces, there is tightening that needs to be done on a regular basis, but there is no tightening with Invisalign; you simply get a new aligner to start using every couple of weeks

Many employers set higher limits than you think on the amount of Flexible Spending Dollars you can contribute each year, tax-free, from your salary to pay for health care expenses, like orthodontic treatment. Many employers allow \$2,500 or even \$5,000 of pre-tax earnings to be set aside in your flex plan.



8035 Madison Ave., Suite G-2  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610  
916-436-8378 • [delurgioandblom.com](http://delurgioandblom.com)