

# Aligner Instructions

## Aligner Wear

- Aligners are designed to be worn for 22 hours per day, every day. Failure to wear the aligners for the prescribed number of hours per day or in the prescribed order and/or not using the aligners as directed may lengthen the treatment time and affect the final treatment outcome.
- The aligners are marked with the sequencing order. The aligners should be worn in the order prescribed, usually in increasing numerical order.
- Aligners should be changed approximately every 7-10 days, or as instructed by your orthodontist.

## What to Expect

- Gingival tissue (your gums) and teeth may become sore or tender after initial aligner placement, and when placing each sequential aligner.
- Speech may be affected when initially beginning treatment, but effects will minimize 1-2 weeks after beginning to wear the aligners.
- Temporary increase in the amount of saliva or dryness of the mouth may occur.
- The alignment of your teeth and the way they fit together may change during treatment and result in temporary discomfort.
- At the end of treatment, wear your retainer as directed. Failure to do so may result in your teeth shifting from their final positions.
- Small, tooth-colored attachments or build-ups may be bonded to one or more teeth during treatment. Please be sure that your aligners fit with the attachments. If your aligners are not lining up with your attachments or your attachments come off your teeth, please contact the office. The doctor will remove these attachments at the appropriate time during treatment.

## Inserting your Aligners

- 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.
- 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.
- If there is a problem with fit, do not proceed to the next aligner stage.

## Removing your Aligners

- Using your fingers, start on one side at the molars (back teeth) and slowly work your way around to the other side.
- To help prevent damage, avoid any unnecessary removal.
- DO NOT use any sharp objects to remove your aligners.
- Immediately rinse and clean the aligners with water. Shake off excess water and then store your aligners in their case.
- As you proceed to each new stage, all old stages are to be saved until treatment is completed.

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## Daily Care and Maintenance

- Prior to inserting an aligner, it should be cleaned with a soft bristle toothbrush and running water.
- Do not use denture cleaners to clean your aligners. Do not soak them in mouthwash. Doing so may alter the surface of aligners, making them more visible.
- An aligner carrying case is included in your starter kit. We recommend storing your aligners in the case when they are not in your mouth. This will help protect them from damage or loss.
- Ensure that there is not hard debris (i.e. food or other foreign material) in the aligner before inserting. Foreign material may lead to damage of the enamel.

## Proper Oral Hygiene

- It is recommended that you wash your hands with soap and water before handling your aligners.
- The aligners should be removed for eating and drinking. You may drink water with the aligners inserted.
- Brush your teeth (and floss if necessary) after eating and before reinserting your aligners. If it is not possible to brush, rinse your mouth with water before reinserting the aligner.
- Eating and/or drinking sugary foods and beverages while wearing the aligners may lead to cavities, white spots on your teeth and periodontal disease.
- If you have any questions regarding hygiene, please consult your orthodontist.
- Regular dental checkups and hygiene appointments with your general dentist are recommended during aligner therapy.

## Precautions

- Keep aligners out of reach of young children and pets.
- Gums, cheeks and lips may be abraded or irritated by the aligners.
- Care should be used when using instruments or tools to seat and/or remove aligners so that aligners do not become damaged. Any resulting rough edges or cracks can irritate the gums, cheeks and lips.
- Caries, decalcification, periodontal disease and permanent stains may occur if consistent and proper oral hygiene, such as brushing and flossing, is not performed as recommended.
- The alignment of your teeth and the way they fit together may require additional adjustments by your orthodontist at the end of treatment.
- In rare instances, aligner treatment may result in temporomandibular joint (TMJ) pain, headaches or ear problems.