



Advice if you are being treated with Clear Aligners but unable to attend for your routine check during the COVID19 pandemic

Your Clear Aligners are clear plastic braces that move teeth as you change from one aligner to the next. Each aligner moves your teeth a fraction of the way towards making your teeth straight. These aligners are made by many different companies but are grouped under the title of **Clear Aligner Therapy (CAT)**.

In order to prevent your teeth returning to their start position or even worse there being unwanted tooth movement you MUST keep wearing an aligner until you can see your orthodontist again. Each aligner can act as a retainer (which will hold the teeth in the current position). It may be possible to reduce the amount of wear of the current aligner/retainer to nights only or evenings and nights to stabilise the tooth position without moving them further.

Aligner Problems

Aligners are usually very comfortable to wear. However, please follow the instructions you were given at the start of your treatment to manage any small issues that may arise.

The aligner does not fit properly

- Revert to the previous aligner for a few days and then re-fit the next aligner.
- If it still does not fit contact your orthodontist or use the aligner that fits well as a retainer until you can get an appointment.

The aligner rubs and causes an ulcer or is digging in.

- Use an emery board, or nail file to buff down the edge of the aligner to make it comfortable.
- Orthodontic wax can also be used if the edge of the aligner sticks out. The wax can protect your lip.

An attachment has fallen off

- Keep treatment progressing as normal
- Advise your orthodontist
- Watch the tooth which has lost the attachment and if it seems to fit the aligner less well stop progressing treatment to the next aligner and wear the current aligner as a retainer.

Loss of all aligners

- Contact your orthodontist and they may be able to organise new aligners to be sent out.

Retainer Issues

- Contact your orthodontist for advice
- Lost retainers can, sometimes, be replaced and new ones sent directly to you.
- If you have the last aligner from your treatment. Use that as a retainer until a replacement can be made.

Each section corresponds to a stage you may be at in the course of your CAT treatment:

Start of Treatment

If you have had records taken, these could be a scan or impressions, to make your aligners but have not had them fitted your treatment cannot start until the practice opens again.

- You should not have your aligners sent through the post to you.
- They should be fitted and checked by an orthodontist.

After Fitting the Aligners, but Before Attachments are Placed

Attachments are small composite shapes, bonded in a precise position to the surface of your teeth, which help with the controlled movement of your teeth. Often these are placed at stage 3 so that you may have been given the first two/three aligners to start your treatment and your next appointment would have been for these attachments to be placed.

- Wear the aligners you have for the prescribed length of time (1 or 2 weeks each) up until stage 3.
- Retain the position your teeth have moved to by wearing the last aligner, possibly number 3, at night only. This will hold your teeth in a stable position until attachments can be placed. The aligner should be removed in the morning, cleaned and stored safely to be placed on your teeth at night time.
- Keep the previous aligner as well, number 2. If something untoward were to happen to aligner 3 you could drop back to aligner 2 as a retainer. Contact your orthodontist to advise them.
- It is impossible to progress any further with your treatment until the attachments are in place.

Mid-treatment

At this stage you will be very used to wearing your aligners and know what to expect. Please keep wearing your aligners as normal. Change them as prescribed but please make sure your teeth are ready for the next aligner.

- If the new aligner does not engage your teeth or the attachments fully then wear the previous aligner for a day, or two, or three more before changing to the next one in the series.
- Make sure the aligner seats fully. Use 'chewies', or something similar to help seat the aligner.
- This is a time to make sure each aligner fits really well, as you progress, and does the work of moving your teeth properly, especially when a visit to the orthodontist may be delayed.
- Work through your aligners until you are wearing the last one you have in your possession. Wear the last aligners for 2 weeks full time, then reduce to wearing them just at night time only as retainers.
- Always keep previous aligners in the set. You can revert to wearing the penultimate aligner if the current one cracks, or is lost.
- If ALL of your aligners are lost contact your orthodontist. It is possible, with some aligner manufacturers, to have a specific stage of treatment aligner made and posted directly to you.

These should be tried in and if they feel normal, although probably a little tight, they should be worn full time for two weeks and then as retainers. There is normally a small charge for this service.

End of Treatment

You may reach the last aligner in the series which have been prescribed. The attachments cannot be removed until the current restrictions are lifted and the practice opens.

- Wear the last aligners as retainers.
 - Retain the position your teeth have moved to by wearing the last aligner at night only. This will hold your teeth in a stable position until you can have an appointment again. The aligner should be removed in the morning, cleaned and stored safely to be placed on your teeth at night time.
- Keep the previous aligner as well. If something untoward were to happen to the aligner you were wearing then drop back to the previous aligner as a retainer.
- When the attachments are removed proper retainers will be made. The aligners are not designed to do this job long term but they will work very well as retainers for several weeks.

Retention

This is the same as all orthodontic treatment and you should have retainers that fit well. Often these are similar to the clear aligners, but you may have fixed retainers as well. If you have problems with your retainers please contact your orthodontist. They may be able to have new ones manufactured and posted directly to you. You may find that the last treatment aligner works well as a retainer if necessary.

If you are unsure about these instructions please contact your orthodontist.