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### **Wearing and Using Your Invisalign Aligners**

**Aligner Wear:** Aligners are to be worn full time with the exception of cleaning teeth and eating, amounting to a minimum of 22 hours per day.

- **300 hours of wear per aligner set** – Studies show that the aligners need at least 300 hours of wear to move your teeth. At 22 hours a day, in two weeks you will accumulate 308 hours.
- When the aligners are not in the mouth they are not working, so treatment is not progressing!
- Possible relapse – If periods of time pass and aligners are not in the mouth, small increments of “relapse” can occur which will greatly affect treatment response time.
- You may drink with your aligners in, but stay away from hot and colored liquids to prevent warping and staining your aligners. Remember to brush your teeth and aligners after drinking any sugary or citrus type beverages to prevent decay.
- Store the current aligners with you in a case when they are not in use; wrapping them in tissue may cause them to accidentally be discarded.

**Attachments:** Attachments are components of Invisalign treatment that are either facilitating difficult tooth movements or keeping the aligner stable. It is very important that the “bumps” or attachments on the teeth engage into the corresponding “bumps” in the Aligner. You should:

- Chewies – Each time you insert your aligners, use your “chewie.” Bite the chewie multiple times along the full arch. We recommend biting on the chewies, especially on the front teeth for 5 minutes 2x a day (morning and evening).
- Attachments should engage – Each time you place your aligner it is very important that you check to be sure the attachments are engaged. If it is not engaged, the attachment can possibly work against your treatment plan. If this happens, keep chewing on your chewie to help facilitate the fit (this can sometimes take minutes).
- Check attachments regularly and if one is chipped, broken or loose, notify your doctor promptly, so treatment does not regress.

**Changing to the next set of aligners at home. At the 2 week point you can assess whether to move to the next set of aligners:**

- **If the current aligner is still fitting tightly** (difficult to remove or place, or causing soreness with wear), or if small clear edges appear between the aligner and the teeth in any area DO NOT change the aligner yet, wear it for one more week. If after the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of wear, any of the above are still present, call our office so we may inform the Doctor.

- If you have increased the period of wear for a set of aligners, please call our office to adjust the timing of your next appointment. Careful monitoring and increasing wear time (if necessary) will prevent backtracking and extended treatment. At each visit, the most recent aligner should be in place for the full 2 weeks for the Doctor to evaluate the fit of the trays.
- If the current aligner fits well and is not tight, do not proceed to the next set unless it has been 2 weeks. Reduced pressure does not indicate that movements are not occurring. Use your chewies.
- Keep all of your old aligners in a clean plastic bag. This is a backup in case the current set is destroyed or the current aligners do not fit. Keep them out of reach of small children and pets.
- Attachments:
  - Be sure all attachments are intact and not loose. Report any problems to our office promptly.
  - Be sure when you place the new/next aligner that the attachments engage. You may monitor this by outlining attachments with a wax pencil so that you can see how the outer rim fits into the aligner bump.

**Cleaning:** Clean your aligners at least once a day using a soft bristle tooth brush. Brush and floss your own teeth after every time you eat or drink. Having food trapped between the aligner and your teeth can cause cavities. Regular dental checkups and cleanings are recommended for the continued health of your teeth and gums. Dental restorative treatment (i.e., fillings, crowns, etc.) after the trays have been made will cause the trays to not fit.

**Other IMPORTANT things to know:**

- If you break or lose an aligner, call our office immediately. If an aligner gets lost and needs to be replaced, there may be a fee for a replacement Aligner of \$100.
- Occasionally, an aligner may have a sharp edge. It may be shaven down with an emery board.
- A new scan may be necessary during or at the end of treatment. It is not an indication of something “wrong,” but simply the Dr.’s way of making adjustments in the treatment AKA “detailing your finish.”
- At the end of your first series of aligners it may be necessary to wear another short series of “Refinement Aligners” before the plan is completed.
- Lack of cooperation/Lack of aligner wear can result in additional treatment fees to complete your treatment.