



Ask Dr. Grant



DR GRANT IS A RENOWNED COSMETIC DENTIST TREATING PATIENTS BOTH NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY, THE ONLY COSMETIC DENTIST IN THE REGION GRANTED PRACTISING PRIVILEGES AT NUFFIELD HOSPITAL, EXETER

Invisalign – What's the Story?

What is Invisalign?

Invisalign is a teeth-straightening system that uses almost invisible 'braces' or aligners (a bit like transparent gum shields). Most people won't even notice you're wearing them. A benefit to this system is that you don't have to wait for the final reveal; you can see progress being made.

How does it work?

Pressure is put on the teeth by custom-made aligners that you wear throughout the day and night, except when you eat. Every 2-3 weeks, you switch to a new set of aligners, which has a shape closer to the end goal.

Who does it work best on?

Patients who've had train tracks in the past – and whose teeth have moved back through not wearing the retainers – and patients with minor crowding in both arches. I never treat children under this system, even though many practitioners do.

What happens?

Photos and impressions are taken and a clinical analysis made. You then come back 2-3 weeks later to see a DVD showing the likely tooth movements and treatment time. So, you get a chance to see the likely finished effect before ordering! Once you're happy, each set of aligners is then manufactured for your specific teeth.

What about results?

I've seen incredible results with Invisalign. You're likely to see a visible difference within the first 2 weeks. Teeth will move back if the aligners aren't used as directed though.

How long will it take?

In short, generally less than a year. So, you can see the finishing line! Depending on the amount of movement required, treatment can be as little as 12 weeks. There needs to be consistent supervision, particularly in the early days. I prefer to see patients at least every 4 weeks to begin with.

Any downsides?

The aligners can take a couple of days to get used to initially and speech can be a little affected for the first 24 hours or so, but then things settle back to normal.

Any alternative treatments?

Yes - Metal braces can be fitted by a specialist orthodontist or a suitably trained dentist. There is also the Inman brace (speed brace) which can move teeth in as little as 12 weeks. I will discuss the Inman brace in the next issue.

Cost?

£2000-£6000, depending on where you go, severity of crowding, length of treatment time, age of patient. Some practitioners consider Invisalign a loss-leader, recouping costs from other cosmetic treatments. Always ensure you know what you're paying for – you may need to extend the course if some teeth are reluctant to move, so watch out for potential extra bills in the small print. As always, go for trust and experience. The Invisalign website has a list of the most experienced practitioners. **BT**

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PERCENT OF
WHO YOU ARE IS
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– R. BUCKMINSTER
FULLER**

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