



IS YOUR SMILE A LITTLE SCARY?

Does your smile startle or dazzle? If you have crooked, jagged, worn teeth that rival those of a certain character that tormented Dorothy and Toto, there are new options available you should be aware of.

We all remember the "brace-face" era of school years of braces and, for some, head gear and other unnatural accompaniments that brought further attention to an already awkward stage of life.

Fast forward to today and the introduction of a product called Invisalign. Invisalign is an orthodontic alternative that uses clear aligners to gradually move teeth into their desired position. The benefit of these aligners are that they are thin & removable, allowing you to brush and take care of your teeth without dealing with the wires and rubber bands used with traditional orthodontics. Moreover, they are virtually undetectable and much more comfortable than metal braces. These aligners also minimize food restrictions giving you the freedom to enjoy most of your favorite foods without worrying about breaking or bending brackets.

The process begins with a visit to your dentist. After taking impressions of your teeth and any necessary x-rays, a virtual model can be created which shows you what the end result would look like. A series of aligners are then

manufactured specifically for you and are switched out every 4-6 weeks, leading to gradual movement of your teeth. The total treatment time can be as little as one year and costs will vary based on degree of movement.

Even though there are great advantages to Invisalign, it is not a panacea. The treatment is ideal for orthodontic relapse patients, or those that have seen a shifting of their teeth after previous orthodontic work. It also works wonderfully to close small gaps in your teeth and relieve minor crowding. Dentists are also using Invisalign to bring teeth into a more natural position prior to using veneers. This minimizes the reduction needed for teeth when veneers are placed. For more complicated cases, your dentist may work with your orthodontist to create a plan that best fits your needs, which may include traditional orthodontics and wire braces.

Ultimately, Invisalign is a tremendous product that provides another option to traditional braces. Given the right scenario, it could be a faster and more comfortable solution to straightening teeth. So, if your smile could use a little help, ask your dentist about Invisalign and see it transform from Broom Hilda's scary snaggletooth to Cinderella's sensational sparklers. Dorothy would definitely approve!