



# How To Get a Beautiful Smile Without Being a “Metal Mouth”

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Spectacular Smiles, Superior Service

THE

**DISCHINGER**

TEAM

ORTHODONTICS

In today's ever-changing world, the emphasis on esthetics and beauty is greater than ever. Many factors have made having a beautiful smile more important today than ever before: reality TV, makeover shows, tooth whitening products, social media, the list goes on and on. A great smile is probably the most important non-verbal aspect of a first impression. It's been said that Oprah stated on her show that she assumes people with crooked teeth are poor or not intelligent. More and more adults are seeking orthodontic treatment to help create the smile they have always dreamed of. Fortunately, we are keeping our teeth for life and that wasn't always the

case. Remember, until relatively recently, most people would have lost their teeth to decay by their 30s or 40s—remember grandma's dentures? However, if your bite is off, you may eventually have trouble with cracked teeth, tooth wear, gum recession, and notching of the teeth by the gum line (a term dentists call abfraction). Not only is it important that your smile looks great, but the way your bite comes together needs to be healthy as well. So, with so many adults now seeking orthodontic treatment, the question is often asked, do I have to be a "metal mouth"? You have cosmetic, or clear options, and each have their pros and cons:

# Invisalign

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Of all the clear options to move teeth, Invisalign is the most aesthetic. Over the past decade, through great marketing and word of mouth, Invisalign has become a household name and why wouldn't it be? Orthodontic treatment without braces? Yes please! Invisalign is a series of clear retainer-like trays called aligners. Aligners are typically worn one to two weeks at a time before switching to a new aligner which is slightly different than the one before. Over a series of these Aligners the teeth gradually become straight. One caution before choosing Invisalign: have a serious conversation with yourself and make sure you possess the self-discipline necessary to wear the aligners throughout treatment. Many treatments are completed in under a year, but for more difficult cases, treatments can take two years or more requiring discipline to continue wearing the aligners. If you



# Invisalign

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don't think you can do this, you should strongly consider clear braces or lingual braces (see below).

Invisalign can be done by any licensed dentist. However, many dentists learn to do Invisalign over a weekend course and may not be best equipped to treat or even identify more complicated treatment. The great advantage of having Invisalign treatment performed by an orthodontist rather than a primary care dentist is that orthodontists can combine treatment methods with the aligners in tricky cases and get some really great results. The other advantage of being treated by an orthodontist is that if things just aren't progressing as planned, they can always fall back on braces if necessary. It's comforting to be in the experienced hands of a specialist to be sure.



## Pros

- The most esthetic option for moving teeth
- Can be removed to eat
- Easy to keep teeth clean

## Cons

- Not capable of treating more difficult cases
- Requires discipline to wear the trays all day and night for many months
- Is often offered by dentists with very limited training which may lead to less than ideal results

# Clear Braces

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Although Invisalign is the most esthetic option, it has its limitations. On a scale of 1-10, Invisalign tops out with cases that are a 5 or 6 in difficulty, even when you see the most skilled orthodontist. In more challenging cases, the best option may be clear braces. There are many types of clear braces. The author's personal favorite is currently the Damon Clear system. All other clear braces require the use of a clear elastic band to hold the wire and brace together. This band can discolor when consuming food and beverages rich in color (spaghetti, coffee, wine), as well as collecting bacteria. The Damon Clear system does not require these bands (little doors built into the brace keeps the wire secure) so they stay very clear (nearly translucent) throughout treatment. These braces are not noticeable when you are more than only a few feet away.

## Pros

- Can treat more difficult problems.
- Are much more clear than they used to be

## Cons

- Slightly less esthetic than Invisalign
- Prone to the same problems that conventional braces have such as pokey wires and broken brackets



# Lingual Braces

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Lingual braces are the braces that go on the inside of your teeth. Braces on the inside of the teeth do work and can align the teeth. Lingual braces are technically challenging for even the most gifted orthodontist, because of this it may be difficult to find a practitioner who offers this option for straightening teeth. Also, due to the greater difficulty in treating lingual cases, the associated costs are much higher than traditional braces or Invisalign. While braces on the inside of your teeth might have the advantage of great esthetics, most patients agree that the disadvantage of slurred speech and sores on the tongue far outweigh their good looks. With the advent of Invisalign the use of lingual braces has significantly decreased, however some business people and celebrities still choose lingual braces to improve their smile.

## Pros

- More esthetic than clear braces
- Alternative to Invisalign for more difficult cases

## Cons

- Difficulty speaking
- Uncomfortable
- Higher cost



# Instant Orthodontics

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Instant orthodontics has been popularized both by its catchy name and by reality makeover shows. However, instant orthodontics is not really orthodontics at all. Instant orthodontics is a restorative dental procedure involving a combination of porcelain crowns, root canals and tooth extraction to give the teeth a straight appearance. Instead of orthodontic tooth movement, teeth are ground down and replaced by porcelain caps or sometimes porcelain bridges. This approach is typically not the best option unless you have worn down, severely decayed, or discolored teeth. It's been said that Ben Affleck was told by producer Jerry Bruckheimer that in order to be cast in the lead of the movie Armageddon, Affleck would need to have a 'movie star' smile. Not having months to wait for traditional orthodontics and because Ben's bite had caused significant wear to his teeth, instant orthodontics made sense. A significant negative aspect of excessive restorative work in the place of orthodontics is that porcelain dental work needs replacement every so often. Crowns, bridges and veneers have an average lifespan of only 7-10 years. Instant orthodontics by way of extensive restorative dental work rarely improves the bite like real orthodontics and can be quite costly. It isn't unusual for a large restorative case to cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000.

## Pros

- Can quickly restore worn, broken, or discolored teeth
- Can be done in weeks instead of months or years

## Cons

- Is typically the most expensive of all options
- Requires grinding down teeth and replacing with porcelain
- Requires several replacements throughout your lifetime
- Doesn't correct the bite like traditional orthodontics

# Accelerated Orthodontics

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For many people, the time spent in orthodontic treatment is actually more important than how noticeable the braces are. Maybe you or your child is getting married in the future and you want your new smile in a year or less. By combining state-of-the-art advancements in orthodontic technology combined with advanced bone modulation, we can now complete almost all treatment safely and effectively in under a year and many in as little as four to six months. Plus, you can use clear braces with these techniques! For more information on accelerated orthodontics, visit [www.Brasik.com](http://www.Brasik.com).

Beware of catchy brand names and 'too good to be true' promises of braces claiming faster treatment. Many braces companies imply in their name that their braces work better and faster than traditional orthodontics. Most of the difference in these techniques simply boils down to marketing. More sizzle than steak as the expression goes. The names sound interesting, but commonly these procedures are offered by general dentists, not orthodontists. Be very careful and do your homework before choosing treatments promising fast tooth movements or the ability to finish braces in five or six months.

## Pros

- Can be a great way to achieve high quality treatment in a fraction of the time.

## Cons

- Brand names and marketing can be misleading and you may not be getting what you think you are.
- Be sure to do your homework.

Today's orthodontic treatment offers more options than ever before for those looking to avoid metal braces. I have provided a brief summary of the different choices for you here, but keep in mind every individual is unique and requires a customized treatment plan by a well trained orthodontist for the best results. Our office would be glad to schedule a free consultation for anyone looking for details specific to their own needs. You can learn more information about our office at [www.MyAmazingSmile.com](http://www.MyAmazingSmile.com).

