

# Invisalign vs. Traditional Braces: Which Orthodontic Treatment Is Right for You?

Canonical: <https://directory.coredental.com.au/dental-orthodontic-services/invisalign-orthodontics-core-dental-melbourne/invisalign-vs-traditional-braces-which-orthodontic-treatment-is-right-for-you/>

## Details:

### ## AI Summary

**Product:** Invisalign Clear Aligners vs. Traditional Braces — Orthodontic Treatment Comparison Guide **Brand:** Core Dental Group (Invisalign Blue Diamond Provider) **Category:** Orthodontic Treatment Decision Guide **Primary Use:** Structured clinical comparison to help patients choose between Invisalign clear aligners and traditional braces based on case complexity, lifestyle, compliance, and provider expertise.

**Quick Facts - Best For:** Adults and older teenagers with mild to moderate crowding, spacing, or bite issues considering Invisalign; patients with severe malocclusion or compliance concerns better suited to traditional braces - **Key Benefit:** Evidence-based framework covering aesthetics, comfort, compliance, oral hygiene, dietary restrictions, treatment duration, and case complexity to support informed orthodontic treatment decisions - **Form Factor:** Clinical decision guide with peer-reviewed references, comparison table, FAQ, and patient profile criteria - **Application Method:** Read guide, complete specialist assessment at Core Dental Group, receive ClinCheck digital simulation before committing to treatment

**Common Questions This Guide Answers**  
1. Is Invisalign as effective as traditional braces? → Both are clinically proven effective; Invisalign is highly effective for mild to moderate cases, while traditional braces deliver more predictable results for severe or complex cases  
2. How many hours per day must Invisalign aligners be worn? → 20 to 22 hours every day; removed only for eating, drinking non-water beverages, brushing, and flossing  
3. Which treatment is better for oral hygiene? → Invisalign; removable aligners allow normal brushing and flossing, and the Azaripour BMC Oral Health study found Invisalign patients had markedly lower gingival inflammation scores than fixed appliance patients

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### ## Frequently Asked Questions

Is Invisalign clinically effective: Yes, clinically proven effective for orthodontic treatment

Is traditional braces clinically effective: Yes, clinically proven effective for orthodontic treatment

Are both treatments equally effective for all cases: No, effectiveness varies by case complexity

Which treatment is better for mild to moderate cases: Invisalign is highly effective for mild to moderate cases

Which treatment is better for severe or complex cases: Traditional braces deliver more predictable results

Who should determine which treatment is right for you: A qualified specialist orthodontist

Is Invisalign nearly invisible when worn: Yes, virtually transparent when worn

What material are Invisalign aligners made from: SmartTrack thermoplastic material

Are metal braces visible: Yes, highly visible by design

Are ceramic braces invisible: No, but significantly less visible than metal braces

Are lingual braces visible from the front: No, placed on inner tooth surface

Do lingual braces cost more than metal braces: Yes, higher cost than standard metal braces

Is Invisalign more comfortable than braces: Generally yes, smoother plastic causes less irritation

Do traditional braces cause mouth irritation: Yes, brackets and wires can irritate cheeks and lips

When does Invisalign discomfort typically occur: First one to two days after switching to a new tray

Does Invisalign discomfort subside: Yes, subsides as teeth adjust to each new tray

Can braces cause emergency visits: Yes, broken brackets or protruding wires may require emergency visits

What is the average Invisalign treatment duration: Approximately 18 months

What is the average traditional braces treatment duration: Approximately 24 months

Is the six-month Invisalign speed advantage consistent across all cases: No, gap narrows when case complexity is controlled

Does treatment duration with Invisalign depend on patient behaviour: Yes, compliance directly determines treatment timeline

Do traditional braces offer a more predictable treatment timeline: Yes, because they are non-removable

How many hours per day must Invisalign be worn: 20 to 22 hours every day

When can Invisalign aligners be removed: Only for eating, drinking non-water beverages, brushing, and flossing

What is the success rate for compliant Invisalign patients: 95% achieve expected outcomes within projected treatment time

What percentage of patients consistently meet full Invisalign compliance: Approximately 36%

Does poor Invisalign compliance extend treatment duration: Yes, significantly

Do traditional braces require compliance with wear time: No, they are fixed and work continuously

Which treatment is better for patients with compliance concerns: Traditional braces

Are there dietary restrictions with Invisalign: No dietary restrictions

Are there dietary restrictions with traditional braces: Yes, significant restrictions throughout treatment

How long must braces patients follow dietary restrictions: For the entire 12 to 24 months of treatment

Can braces patients eat hard foods: No, hard foods must be avoided

Can braces patients eat sticky foods: No, sticky foods must be avoided

Why must braces patients avoid certain foods: To prevent dislodging brackets or bending wires

Is oral hygiene easier with Invisalign or braces: Easier with Invisalign

Do fixed braces increase plaque buildup risk: Yes, they limit effective oral hygiene

Do Invisalign patients have better gum health than braces patients: Yes, significantly better gingival health

What did the Azaripour BMC Oral Health study find: Invisalign patients had markedly lower gingival inflammation scores

Do Invisalign patients have lower oral bacterial counts: Yes, compared to traditional braces patients

Is Invisalign recommended for patients with gum disease history: Yes, due to superior oral hygiene outcomes

Can Invisalign treat severe skeletal jaw discrepancies: No, braces are typically required

Can Invisalign treat large tooth rotations effectively: No, braces typically outperform for large rotations

Can Invisalign treat significant vertical tooth movements: No, braces are generally superior for this

Are complex multi-tooth extraction cases better suited to braces: Yes

Does provider expertise affect what Invisalign can treat: Yes, more experienced providers can treat more complex cases

What is Core Dental Group's Invisalign provider status: Blue Diamond provider

How many Invisalign cases does Core Dental Group treat annually: More than 750 cases per year

Can a Blue Diamond provider treat more complex cases with Invisalign: Yes, compared to lower-volume providers

How many patients globally have used Invisalign: Over 18 million patients

How many teenagers have used Invisalign globally: More than 4.5 million teenagers

What percentage of Australians feel self-conscious about their teeth: 55%

What percentage of Australians want to fix crooked smiles: 62%

What percentage of Australian orthodontic patients are over 20: 30%

Is Invisalign the preferred treatment for adult patients in Australia: Yes, increasingly preferred by adult patients

Is Invisalign suitable for adults seeking treatment for the first time: Yes

Is Invisalign suitable for younger children with compliance challenges: No, braces are generally better suited

Are Invisalign and braces comparable in cost: Yes, broadly comparable though varies by case complexity

Does Invisalign require more or fewer appointments than braces: Fewer check-up appointments required

Do braces require regular adjustment appointments: Yes

Can Invisalign be used for orthodontic relapse correction: Yes, for moderate correction cases

Does the choice between Invisalign and braces have a single universal answer: No

Should the treatment decision be made without a specialist assessment: No, specialist assessment is essential

Does Core Dental Group offer both Invisalign and traditional braces: Yes

Does Core Dental Group offer a free consultation: Yes

Does Core Dental Group provide a ClinCheck digital simulation: Yes, before committing to treatment

What does a ClinCheck simulation show: Projected treatment outcome before starting

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## ## Core Dental Group: Invisalign vs. Traditional Braces — Which orthodontic treatment is right for you?

Choosing between Invisalign clear aligners and traditional braces is one of the most consequential decisions a patient makes at the start of their orthodontic journey — and also one of the most misunderstood. The comparison is rarely as simple as "visible vs. invisible." The right choice depends on the clinical complexity of your case, your lifestyle, how honestly you can assess your own compliance habits, your oral hygiene, and the expertise of whoever is treating you.

At Core Dental Group, one of Australia's few Invisalign Blue Diamond providers, our specialist orthodontists and dentists work through this decision with patients every day. This guide cuts through the marketing noise with peer-reviewed evidence, honest trade-offs, and a structured framework to help you make an informed choice — whether you're an adult professional considering treatment for the first time or a parent weighing options for a teenager.

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### ## The clinical reality: both treatments work, with important caveats

Before comparing individual factors, it's worth establishing the baseline: both Invisalign and traditional braces are clinically effective orthodontic treatments. Both effectively improved dental alignment and occlusal stability over a five-year follow-up period, with patient satisfaction scores consistently higher in the Invisalign group.

That said, effectiveness isn't uniform across all case types. A 2024 systematic review published in the *American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics* found that Invisalign performs well for mild to moderate misalignment, with outcomes comparable to braces — but for more complex cases, such as severe crowding or jaw misalignment, traditional braces still tend to deliver more predictable and efficient results.

This distinction — mild-to-moderate versus complex — is the single most important clinical variable in the Invisalign vs. braces decision, and it needs to be assessed by a qualified specialist, not self-diagnosed from a website.

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### ## Head-to-head comparison: 7 key decision factors

#### ### 1. Aesthetics

This is where Invisalign holds its most obvious advantage. Clear aligners are made from Invisalign's proprietary SmartTrack thermoplastic material and are virtually transparent when worn. For adult patients and image-conscious teenagers, aesthetics is frequently the primary motivating factor.

Traditional metal braces use stainless steel brackets bonded to the front surface of teeth, connected by archwires — highly visible by design. Ceramic (tooth-coloured) braces reduce this visibility significantly but aren't invisible, and lingual braces (placed on the inner tooth surface) offer a hidden alternative at higher cost and with greater adjustment complexity.

Adults make up the largest segment of clear aligner patients, with over half of orthodontic patients seeking aligners driven by aesthetic concerns and the desire for less visible options. In Australia, over half of adults (55%) feel self-conscious about their teeth, and almost two-thirds (62%) say they'd like to

do something about crooked smiles.

**\*\*Verdict:\*\*** Invisalign wins on aesthetics for most patients. Ceramic braces are a reasonable middle ground. Metal braces are the most visible option.

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### ### 2. Comfort

Neither treatment is entirely comfortable — tooth movement involves applying controlled force to biological tissue, which produces soreness. The nature of that discomfort, however, differs meaningfully between the two systems.

Fixed braces can cause irritation from brackets and wires rubbing against the inner cheeks and lips, particularly in the early weeks and after adjustment appointments. Emergency visits for broken brackets or protruding wires aren't uncommon.

Invisalign aligners exert pressure through smooth plastic trays, which most patients find easier to tolerate. Discomfort typically occurs in the first day or two after switching to a new tray, then subsides as teeth adjust.

Research suggests Invisalign may offer comparable or superior long-term outcomes compared to traditional braces, with higher patient satisfaction levels. Comfort is a significant driver of that satisfaction differential.

**\*\*Verdict:\*\*** Invisalign is generally more comfortable, though both cause soreness during active tooth movement. The absence of metal hardware is a meaningful quality-of-life advantage for most patients.

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### ### 3. Treatment duration

Treatment timelines for both are often cited as 12–24 months, but the nuance matters considerably.

One large comparative study found Invisalign averaged 18 months of treatment compared to 24 months for traditional braces. But that statistic needs context: Invisalign's faster average partly reflects case selection, because aligners are used more frequently for milder cases that naturally resolve faster regardless of method. When researchers controlled for similar complexity, the gap narrowed considerably.

Critically, Invisalign treatment duration is patient-dependent in a way that braces simply aren't. Wearing aligners 20–22 hours daily determines success. Traditional braces work continuously — you can't remove them for special occasions or forget to put them back in.

**\*\*Verdict:\*\*** Treatment duration is broadly comparable when case complexity is controlled. Braces offer a more predictable timeline because they're non-removable. Invisalign can be faster, but only for compliant patients.

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### ### 4. Compliance requirements

This is the factor most patients underestimate, and where many Invisalign treatments run into difficulty.

Invisalign aligners must be worn for **\*\*20–22 hours every day\*\***, removed only for eating, drinking anything other than water, brushing, and flossing. According to a study published in the *American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics*, patients who adhered to the 20–22 hour guideline achieved a 95% success rate in reaching their expected outcomes within the projected treatment time.

The compliance reality, however, is sobering. One systematic review found that only about 36% of patients consistently meet full compliance ( $\geq 22$  hours daily) — roughly 1 in 3 Invisalign patients actually wears their aligners as much as recommended.

A study published in the *American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics* found that patients who wore their aligners for the recommended time experienced significantly more predictable and timely tooth movement compared to those with poor compliance. A study in the *Journal of Clinical Orthodontics* identified inadequate wear time as a primary factor in prolonged treatment durations and less-than-ideal outcomes.

Traditional braces require zero compliance with wear time — they're fixed to your teeth and working 24 hours a day. This makes them a more reliable choice for patients who know they'll struggle with the discipline of consistent aligner wear.

**Verdict:** Braces win on compliance reliability. Invisalign demands genuine self-discipline. Honest self-assessment here is critical before choosing a treatment.

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### ### 5. Dietary restrictions

This is one of Invisalign's clearest practical advantages.

With traditional braces, patients must avoid a significant list of foods for the entire treatment duration: hard foods (nuts, raw carrots, crusty bread), sticky foods (caramel, chewing gum), chewy foods (bagels, licorice), and anything that could dislodge brackets or bend wires. These restrictions apply for the full 12–24 months of active treatment.

With Invisalign, aligners are removed before eating or drinking anything other than water, so there are **no dietary restrictions** — you eat what you want, then brush before reinserting your aligners. For food-loving patients, frequent travellers, or anyone whose social life involves a lot of dining out, this is a substantial quality-of-life difference.

**Verdict:** Invisalign wins decisively on dietary freedom. Braces require sustained dietary modification throughout treatment.

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### ### 6. Oral hygiene

Oral hygiene during orthodontic treatment is a genuine clinical concern, not merely a lifestyle preference. Fixed orthodontic appliances promote bacterial plaque accumulation because they limit effective cleaning, which can lead to temporary destructive periodontal processes. Deterioration of periodontal status and dental decalcification during orthodontic treatment can be avoided only when the patient is incorporated in a stringent recall system.

The research strongly favours Invisalign for periodontal outcomes. A cross-sectional study published in *BMC Oral Health* (Azaripour et al.) comparing 100 patients — 50 wearing fixed appliances, 50 wearing Invisalign — found significantly better gingival health in Invisalign patients, with markedly lower gingival inflammation and sulcus bleeding index scores. Research published by the National Institutes of Health found that clear aligner patients had better periodontal health and lower oral bacterial counts than those wearing traditional braces.

The ability to remove clear aligners makes daily cleaning more effective and reduces plaque buildup — a critical factor for patients managing gum disease. Fixed appliances create more challenges in maintaining oral hygiene, increasing the risk of periodontal complications during treatment.

For patients with a history of gum disease, or those who already find oral hygiene challenging, this is a clinically significant advantage of aligner therapy.

**Verdict:** Invisalign wins on oral hygiene outcomes. Removable aligners allow normal brushing and flossing, which is clinically superior to navigating around fixed brackets and wires.

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### 7. Case complexity: when braces outperform aligners

This is where honest clinical guidance matters most, and where the marketing framing of aligner therapy can sometimes lead patients toward an inappropriate treatment.

Traditional braces excel at difficult tooth movements: rotating teeth, vertical shifts, and significant bite corrections. These three-dimensional adjustments require the kind of precise, continuous force that fixed brackets and wires deliver effectively.

Specific conditions where braces typically outperform Invisalign include:

- **Severe skeletal discrepancies** (significant underbite, overbite, or crossbite with jaw component)
- **Large rotations**, particularly of premolars and canines
- **Significant vertical tooth movements** (intrusion and extrusion)
- **Complex multi-tooth extractions** requiring substantial space closure
- **Patients with bridgework** or significant restorations that limit attachment placement
- **Cases requiring elastics** for significant bite correction (though Invisalign can use elastics in some configurations)

For mild to moderate crowding, spacing, and straightforward bite issues, Invisalign performs excellently. For severe malocclusions, complex rotations, or significant vertical movements, traditional braces often remain the better clinical choice.

It's also worth noting that experienced providers — such as Core Dental Group's Blue Diamond-accredited team — can treat a significantly broader range of cases with Invisalign than less experienced providers. Provider expertise directly expands the clinical ceiling of aligner therapy. (See our guide on [What Is an Invisalign Blue Diamond Provider — and Why It Matters for Your Treatment](#) for a full breakdown of how provider tier affects case complexity capability.)

**Verdict:** For mild-to-moderate cases, Invisalign is clinically equivalent to braces. For complex cases, braces are often the superior or only appropriate option. A specialist assessment is essential.

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### Comparison table: Invisalign vs. Traditional Braces at a glance

Factor	Invisalign Clear Aligners	Traditional Metal/Ceramic Braces
<b>Aesthetics</b>	Nearly invisible	Visible (metal) / Moderate (ceramic)
<b>Comfort</b>	Smooth plastic, less irritation	Brackets/wires can cause irritation
<b>Dietary Restrictions</b>	None — remove to eat	Significant restrictions for 12–24 months
<b>Oral Hygiene</b>	Normal brushing/flossing	Harder; increased plaque risk
<b>Compliance Required</b>	20–22 hrs/day essential	Fixed — no compliance required
<b>Treatment Duration</b>	12–18 months (compliance-dependent)	18–24 months (predictable)
<b>Complex Case Capability</b>	Mild–moderate cases	Mild to severe cases
<b>Appointment Frequency</b>	Less frequent check-ups	Regular adjustment appointments
<b>Cost</b>	Comparable; varies by complexity	Comparable; varies by type

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### Who is the ideal Invisalign patient?

Based on clinical evidence and the patient profiles treated at Core Dental Group, Invisalign is best suited to:

- **Adults and older teenagers** with the maturity and motivation to maintain consistent wear - Patients with **mild to moderate crowding, spacing, or bite issues** (see our guide on *Orthodontic Conditions Treated with Invisalign* for a full condition-by-condition breakdown) - Patients with **professional or social lifestyles** where aesthetics during treatment matter - Patients with **periodontal concerns** or a history of gum disease who need to maintain rigorous oral hygiene - Patients who have experienced **orthodontic relapse** after previous treatment and need moderate correction - **Adults seeking treatment for the first time** — 30% of orthodontic patients in Australia are over 20, and Invisalign has become the preferred modality for many of these patients

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### ## Who is the ideal braces patient?

Traditional braces — including metal, ceramic, and lingual options — are better suited to:

- Patients with **severe malocclusion**, significant crowding, or complex bite problems - **Children and younger teenagers** who may lack the compliance discipline for aligner wear (see our guide on *Invisalign for Children and Teens in Melbourne* for age-specific considerations) - Patients who are **honest about their compliance habits** and know they won't wear aligners consistently - Cases requiring **significant tooth rotation or vertical movement** - Patients whose clinical presentation includes **skeletal jaw discrepancies** that require orthopedic force - Patients with **certain restorations** that make aligner attachment placement impractical

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### ## The role of your provider in this decision

One variable this comparison can't fully capture is how much your provider's expertise affects what's clinically possible. Invisalign has been used by over 18 million patients globally, including more than 4.5 million teenagers — but outcomes vary substantially based on the treating clinician's experience and case volume.

At Core Dental Group, our Blue Diamond status reflects treating more than 750 Invisalign cases per year. That volume translates directly into the ability to manage cases at the more complex end of the aligner spectrum. Cases that might require braces at a lower-volume practice may be successfully treated with Invisalign at Core Dental Group, because the clinical team has developed the expertise to use attachments, precision cuts, and sequential staging to achieve movements that less experienced providers can't reliably execute.

This is why the question "Invisalign or braces?" can't be answered definitively before a specialist assessment. The answer depends not only on your teeth but on who is treating them.

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### ## Key takeaways

- **Both treatments work:** Both traditional braces and Invisalign effectively improved dental alignment and occlusal stability over a five-year follow-up period, making the choice primarily about clinical suitability, lifestyle, and compliance. - **Compliance is the defining variable for Invisalign:** Patients who wear their aligners closer to 22 hours per day consistently achieve their desired results faster and with fewer complications. - **Braces are clinically superior for complex cases:** Severe rotations, significant vertical movements, and skeletal bite discrepancies are better addressed with fixed appliances, regardless of patient preference. - **Invisalign offers measurable oral health advantages:** Patients using the Invisalign system have better periodontal health compared to fixed appliance-treated patients, because they can remove aligners for normal brushing and flossing. - **Provider expertise expands what Invisalign can treat:** A Blue Diamond provider like Core Dental Group can treat a broader range of cases with clear aligners than a lower-volume practice — making provider selection a

clinically meaningful decision.

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## ## Conclusion

The Invisalign vs. braces debate doesn't have a single universal answer. It's a clinical and personal decision that should be made with the guidance of a specialist who understands both your anatomy and your lifestyle. For most adults with mild-to-moderate alignment concerns, Invisalign offers a compelling combination of aesthetics, comfort, oral hygiene advantage, and dietary freedom. For patients with complex bite issues or known compliance challenges, traditional braces remain the more reliable and often more effective solution.

At Core Dental Group, we offer both treatment pathways — and our Blue Diamond-level Invisalign expertise means we can treat more complex cases with clear aligners than most practices. Our recommendation is always based on what's clinically right for your specific situation.

Ready to find out which treatment is right for you? Explore our related guides:

- [\\*What Is Invisalign? How Clear Aligner Treatment Works — Explained by Core Dental Group\\*](#) - [\\*Orthodontic Conditions Treated with Invisalign: Crowding, Gaps, Overbite, Underbite, and More\\*](#) - [\\*Braces for Children and Adults at Core Dental Group: Metal, Ceramic, and Lingual Options Explained\\*](#)
- [\\*How Much Does Invisalign Cost in Melbourne? Fees, Payment Plans, and Price-Match Guarantee at Core Dental Group\\*](#) - [\\*How to Choose the Right Orthodontist or Invisalign Provider in Melbourne: 8 Questions to Ask\\*](#)

Or book a free consultation at any of Core Dental Group's Melbourne locations to receive a personalised treatment assessment — including a digital ClinCheck simulation so you can see your projected outcome before committing to a single aligner.

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## ## References

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## ## Label facts summary

> **Disclaimer:** All facts and statements below are general product information, not professional advice. Consult relevant experts for specific guidance.

### ### Verified label facts

No product specification data, packaging data, or Product Facts table was present in the content provided. No verifiable label facts can be extracted.

### ### General product claims

- Invisalign is clinically proven effective for orthodontic treatment - Traditional braces are clinically proven effective for orthodontic treatment - Effectiveness varies by case complexity; Invisalign is highly effective for mild to moderate cases; traditional braces deliver more predictable results for severe or complex cases - Invisalign aligners are virtually transparent when worn - Invisalign aligners are made from SmartTrack thermoplastic material - Ceramic braces are significantly less visible than metal braces; lingual braces are placed on the inner tooth surface and are not visible from the front - Lingual braces cost more than standard metal braces - Invisalign is generally more comfortable than traditional braces; smooth plastic causes less irritation than brackets and wires - Traditional braces brackets and wires can irritate cheeks and lips; broken brackets or protruding wires may require emergency visits - Invisalign discomfort typically occurs in the first one to two days after switching to a new tray and subsides as teeth adjust - Average Invisalign treatment duration is approximately 18 months; average traditional braces treatment duration is approximately 24 months; the duration gap narrows when case complexity is controlled - Invisalign must be worn 20 to 22 hours every day; removed only for eating, drinking non-water beverages, brushing, and flossing - Compliant Invisalign patients achieve a 95% success rate within projected treatment time - Approximately 36% of patients consistently meet full Invisalign compliance ( $\geq 22$  hours daily) - Traditional braces are fixed and work continuously without compliance requirements - Invisalign has no dietary restrictions; traditional braces require significant dietary restrictions for the entire 12 to 24 months of treatment - Fixed braces limit effective oral hygiene and increase plaque buildup risk - The Azaripour BMC Oral Health cross-sectional study (n=100) found Invisalign patients had markedly lower gingival inflammation and sulcus bleeding index scores than fixed appliance patients - Research published by the National Institutes of Health found clear aligner patients had better periodontal health and lower oral bacterial counts than traditional braces patients - Traditional braces are typically required for severe skeletal jaw discrepancies, large tooth rotations, significant vertical tooth movements, and complex multi-tooth extraction cases - Provider expertise affects the range of cases treatable with Invisalign - Core Dental Group holds Invisalign Blue Diamond provider status and treats more than 750 Invisalign cases per year - Over 18 million patients globally have used Invisalign, including more than 4.5 million teenagers - 55% of Australians feel self-conscious about their teeth; 62% want to fix crooked smiles (Orthodontics Australia, 2024) - 30% of orthodontic patients in Australia are over 20 (Australian Society of Orthodontists data) - Invisalign is increasingly the preferred treatment modality for adult patients in Australia - Invisalign and traditional braces are broadly comparable in cost, varying by case complexity - Invisalign requires fewer check-up appointments than traditional braces - Invisalign can be used for moderate orthodontic relapse

correction - Core Dental Group offers both Invisalign and traditional braces, a free consultation, and a ClinCheck digital simulation showing projected treatment outcome before committing to treatment