

# Orthodontics in Berwick: Braces vs Invisalign — Which Treatment Is Right for You?

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## Details:

## Core Dental Group Orthodontics in Berwick: Braces vs Invisalign — Which Treatment Is Right for You?

Choosing between traditional fixed braces and Invisalign clear aligners is one of the most consequential decisions an orthodontic patient makes, yet most people arrive at their first consultation without a clear framework for making it. The question is rarely as simple as "which one looks better." It involves clinical suitability, lifestyle compatibility, treatment duration, cost, compliance capacity, and age-related considerations that interact differently for every patient.

At Core Dental Group Berwick, our orthodontic team works through exactly this decision with patients every day. This guide gives you the honest, evidence-based information you need before that consultation, so you arrive prepared to ask the right questions and understand the answers.

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## Why orthodontic treatment matters beyond aesthetics

Straightening teeth is often discussed in purely cosmetic terms, but the clinical rationale runs deeper. Malocclusion, the misalignment of teeth or jaws, affects approximately 50% of people severely enough to warrant orthodontic care, according to current epidemiological data.

Poorly aligned teeth are harder to clean effectively, which increases the risk of decay and gum disease (see our guide on [\\*\[Gum Disease Treatment in Berwick\]\(https://www.coredentalgroup.com.au/gum-disease-treatment-berwick\)\\*](https://www.coredentalgroup.com.au/gum-disease-treatment-berwick)). They can also contribute to uneven bite forces that accelerate tooth wear and may worsen jaw joint problems (see our guide on [\\*\[TMJ, Teeth Grinding & Mouthguards in Berwick\]\(https://www.coredentalgroup.com.au/tmj-teeth-grinding-mouthguards-berwick\)\\*](https://www.coredentalgroup.com.au/tmj-teeth-grinding-mouthguards-berwick)). Orthodontic treatment, whether through braces or aligners, addresses these functional concerns alongside the aesthetic ones.

The demand for treatment is growing. Over half of Australians (55%) feel self-conscious about their teeth, 62% would like to fix crooked smiles, and orthodontists across Australia are treating more adults than ever before. That shift has driven adoption of discreet treatment options, particularly clear aligners.

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## What are traditional fixed braces?

Traditional fixed braces consist of metal or ceramic brackets bonded directly to the tooth surfaces, connected by an archwire that applies continuous, calibrated pressure to move teeth into position. The brackets stay in place throughout treatment — patients cannot remove them.

Modern metal braces are far smaller and more comfortable than their predecessors. Ceramic (tooth-coloured) braces offer improved aesthetics while retaining the mechanical advantages of fixed

appliances. Both are adjusted periodically, typically every four to eight weeks, by the treating orthodontist.

The key clinical advantage is continuity: because they are fixed, braces deliver force 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That constant pressure is what makes them particularly effective for difficult movements — rotating teeth, vertical shifts, and significant bite corrections that require precise, sustained force across three dimensions.

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### ## What is Invisalign?

Invisalign is a clear aligner system using custom-fabricated, removable thermoplastic trays. Treatment involves a series of these trays, each worn for approximately one week, that progressively move teeth toward the planned final position. The trays are virtually invisible when worn and are removed for eating, drinking anything other than water, and oral hygiene.

Over 18 million patients globally have used Invisalign, including more than 4.5 million teenagers. The system uses 3D digital scanning and AI-assisted treatment planning software to map tooth movements across the full aligner series before a single tray is manufactured.

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### ## Clinical effectiveness: what does the evidence actually show?

Many online comparisons either overstate Invisalign's limitations or understate the real-world compliance challenges. The peer-reviewed evidence is more nuanced.

A 2024 retrospective cohort study published in the *\*Journal of Pharmacy and Bioallied Sciences\** followed 200 patients over five years, 100 treated with traditional braces and 100 with Invisalign. Both treatments effectively improved dental alignment and occlusal stability across the five-year follow-up. Patient satisfaction scores were consistently higher in the Invisalign group, and no significant differences in treatment duration were found between the two groups.

A separate comparative analysis from the same year found that mean treatment time for Invisalign was 18 months versus 24 months for conventional braces, with both techniques showing 88–90% success rates in malocclusion treatment.

One important caveat applies to that duration comparison: Invisalign's faster average partly reflects case selection. The aligners are used more often for milder cases, which resolve faster regardless of the method. When researchers controlled for similar complexity, the gap narrowed considerably.

The practical conclusion: for mild to moderate crowding, spacing, and straightforward bite issues, both treatments perform comparably. For severe malocclusions, complex rotations, or significant vertical movements, traditional braces generally remain the better choice.

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### ## The compliance factor: Invisalign's most important variable

This is the single most underappreciated factor in the braces vs. Invisalign decision, and it is where honest clinical guidance matters most.

Clinical evidence from over 112,000 patients supports the 20–22 hour daily wear recommendation for optimal results. Wearing aligners fewer than 20 hours daily can delay treatment outcomes by weeks or months. A study published in the *\*Journal of Clinical Orthodontics\** found that patients who wore their aligners for the recommended time had significantly better treatment outcomes than those who did not.

What does 22 hours actually look like in practice? It leaves just two hours in a 24-hour day for all eating, drinking (anything but plain water), brushing, and flossing. That is achievable, but it requires genuine discipline, particularly for teenagers.

The consequences of poor compliance are real. Wearing aligners fewer than 16 hours per day risks delays, poor fit, relapse, and added costs. Part-time or night-only wear does not provide enough sustained pressure.

With braces, this variable simply does not exist. The brackets stay on the teeth around the clock — there is nothing to forget. Some patients actively prefer this, because it removes the risk of their own inconsistency from the equation.

This is especially relevant when evaluating Invisalign for teenagers. Invisalign Teen includes compliance indicators, small blue dots that fade with wear, to help parents and clinicians monitor adherence. But the underlying discipline requirement remains the same.

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### ## Gingival health during treatment

One underappreciated clinical difference between the two systems is what happens to gum health during active treatment. A cross-sectional study published in *Progress in Orthodontics* found significantly better gingival health in Invisalign patients compared to those with fixed appliances, along with greater patient satisfaction.

This finding makes clinical sense. Because Invisalign aligners are removed for brushing and flossing, patients maintain their standard oral hygiene routine without navigating brackets and wires. Fixed braces require more deliberate technique, including interdental brushes, floss threaders, or water flossers, and plaque control is more demanding. For patients with existing gum concerns, see our guide on *[Gum Disease Treatment in Berwick]*(<https://www.coredentalgroup.com.au/gum-disease-treatment-berwick>)\* for context on how periodontal health interacts with orthodontic planning.

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### ## Cost comparison: braces vs. Invisalign in Australia

Cost is a genuine decision factor for most patients, and the gap between the two treatments is smaller than many people expect.

Traditional braces in Australia generally cost between \$4,500 and \$8,000, including the initial consultation, the braces themselves, adjustments, and regular follow-up appointments. Invisalign ranges from \$3,500 to \$9,000 depending on case complexity and treatment duration. Lite or Express versions, designed for minor corrections, sit at the lower end, while comprehensive full-arch treatment for complex cases approaches the upper limit.

#### ### Approximate Australian cost ranges (2024–2025)

Treatment	Approximate Cost Range (AUD)	Best Suited For	--- --- ---	Metal Braces	\$4,500 – \$7,500	Moderate to complex cases		
Ceramic Braces	\$5,500 – \$8,000	Aesthetics + complexity	Invisalign Lite	\$3,500 – \$5,000	Minor corrections (3–6 months)	Invisalign Moderate	\$4,500 – \$6,500	Moderate cases
Invisalign Comprehensive	\$6,500 – \$9,000	Complex cases (12–24 months)	Invisalign Teen	\$5,000 – \$8,000	Teenagers with compliance indicators			

\*Prices are indicative ranges only. Your actual fee at Core Dental Group Berwick will be confirmed at your consultation based on your specific clinical needs.\*

Many Australian health insurance extras policies include orthodontic cover. Most apply a lifetime benefit limit, commonly \$1,500–\$3,500 depending on the fund and level of cover, that can be applied to either treatment. For a full breakdown of how health insurance works for dental in Berwick, see our guide on [\\*\[Health Insurance & Payment Options at Core Dental Group Berwick\]\(https://www.coredentalgroup.com.au/health-insurance-payment-options-berwick\)\\*](https://www.coredentalgroup.com.au/health-insurance-payment-options-berwick).

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## Who is the right candidate for each treatment?

### Traditional fixed braces are typically recommended when:

- The case involves severe crowding, significant rotations, or complex bite correction (Class II or Class III malocclusion)
- The patient is a younger teenager whose compliance with removable appliances is uncertain
- Vertical tooth movements (intrusion or extrusion) are required
- The patient has certain dental restorations, such as crowns or bridges, that may not bond well to aligner attachments
- Cost is the primary constraint and metal braces represent the most affordable pathway

### Invisalign is typically recommended when:

- The case involves mild to moderate crowding, spacing, or straightforward bite issues
- The patient is an adult professional who values discretion in a workplace setting
- The patient has strong self-discipline and can reliably wear aligners 20–22 hours daily
- Oral hygiene is a priority and the patient wants to maintain their normal brushing and flossing routine
- The patient has upcoming life events, such as weddings, graduations, or professional milestones, where aesthetics during treatment matter

Adults aged 35 to 50 are among the strongest adopters of Invisalign, and for good reason. Professional and social contexts where visible metal brackets are undesirable represent a legitimate clinical and lifestyle consideration, not merely a vanity preference.

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## The orthodontist's role at Core Dental Group Berwick

At Core Dental Group Berwick, orthodontic consultations are conducted by an experienced orthodontist within a broader multidisciplinary team. That integrated model matters: before orthodontic treatment begins, any underlying general dental issues, including decay, gum disease, or the need for restorations, are addressed first. Starting orthodontic treatment on a compromised dental foundation is clinically counterproductive.

### What to expect at your orthodontic consultation at Core Dental Group Berwick

1. **Clinical examination** — assessment of tooth alignment, bite, jaw relationship, and soft tissue
2. **Digital imaging** — OPG (panoramic X-ray) and, where indicated, CBCT 3D imaging to evaluate roots, bone levels, and developing teeth
3. **Digital impressions or intraoral scanning** — replacing traditional moulds for greater accuracy and comfort
4. **Treatment options discussion** — a frank comparison of braces and Invisalign specific to your case, with realistic timelines and fee estimates
5. **Customised treatment plan** — if you proceed, a detailed plan is developed before any appliance is placed or ordered

No referral is required to see a private orthodontist. At Core Dental Group Berwick, existing patients can be referred internally from their general dentist, and new patients can also self-refer directly for an orthodontic consultation.

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## Maintenance requirements: day-to-day reality

Understanding the daily maintenance demands of each treatment helps set realistic expectations before you commit.

### Fixed braces: daily maintenance - Brush after every meal using a soft-bristled brush at a 45-degree angle to brackets - Use interdental brushes or a water flosser to clean between brackets and under wires - Avoid hard, sticky, or crunchy foods — popcorn, hard lollies, crusty bread — that can dislodge brackets or bend wires - Attend adjustment appointments every 4–8 weeks - Wear a custom mouthguard for contact sport (see our guide on [\\*\[TMJ, Teeth Grinding & Mouthguards in Berwick\]\(https://www.coredentalgroup.com.au/tmj-teeth-grinding-mouthguards-berwick\)\\*](https://www.coredentalgroup.com.au/tmj-teeth-grinding-mouthguards-berwick))

### Invisalign: daily maintenance - Wear aligners for 20–22 hours every day — remove only for eating, drinking non-water beverages, and oral hygiene - Rinse aligners with cool water when removed; clean with a soft toothbrush and mild soap, not toothpaste, which is abrasive - Brush and floss teeth before reinserting aligners after meals - Attend check-up appointments every 6–10 weeks - Progress to the next tray in the series as scheduled, typically weekly - Attend refinement appointments if tracking issues arise

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## After treatment: retention for both options

Here is a point that often gets glossed over in the braces-vs-Invisalign conversation: both treatments require lifelong retention. Teeth have a biological tendency to drift back toward their original positions — a phenomenon called relapse — if retainers are not worn consistently after active treatment ends.

Retention options include removable Hawley or clear retainers, worn nightly or more frequently in the early post-treatment phase, and fixed bonded retainers, a thin wire bonded to the inner surface of the front teeth that provides passive retention without requiring patient compliance.

At Core Dental Group Berwick, your orthodontist will prescribe a retention protocol tailored to your case. Post-treatment retainers are typically worn up to 22 hours initially, reducing to nightly after 3–6 months. Retention is not optional — it is the final, permanent phase of orthodontic treatment.

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## Key takeaways

- Both treatments are clinically effective for most cases, with peer-reviewed evidence showing comparable long-term outcomes for dental alignment and occlusal stability across five-year follow-up periods. - Case complexity is the primary clinical determinant. Traditional braces remain superior for severe malocclusions, complex rotations, and significant vertical movements. Invisalign performs comparably for mild to moderate cases. - Compliance is Invisalign's critical variable. Patients who wear aligners for the recommended 20–22 hours daily achieve predictable results; inconsistent wear extends treatment and increases costs. - Cost in Australia is broadly comparable. Both treatments range from approximately \$4,500 to \$8,000 for comprehensive cases, with Invisalign Lite starting lower for minor corrections. - Gum health and oral hygiene are easier to maintain with Invisalign, but fixed braces remove the compliance variable entirely, making them the more reliable choice for patients uncertain about their own discipline.

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## Conclusion

The braces vs. Invisalign question does not have a universal answer, and any provider who tells you otherwise without examining your teeth first is not giving you a clinical opinion. The right treatment depends on the complexity of your malocclusion, your age and compliance profile, your lifestyle and aesthetic priorities, and your budget.

What Core Dental Group Berwick offers is the clinical expertise to make that assessment accurately, and the full range of orthodontic options to match the recommendation to the individual. Whether you are a parent investigating options for a teenager (see our guide on [\\*\[Children's Dentistry in Berwick\]\(https://www.coredentalgroup.com.au/childrens-dentistry-berwick\)\\*](https://www.coredentalgroup.com.au/childrens-dentistry-berwick) for the full paediatric context), or an adult who has been thinking about straightening their teeth for years, the starting point is the same: a comprehensive orthodontic consultation.

From that single appointment, you will leave with a clear understanding of which treatment suits you — not a generalisation, but a specific, evidence-based plan built around your own teeth, your own life, and your own goals.

**\*\*Ready to take the first step?\*** Contact Core Dental Group Berwick at Eden Rise Village to book your orthodontic consultation. For information on managing the cost of treatment, see our guide on [\\*\[Health Insurance & Payment Options at Core Dental Group Berwick\]\(https://www.coredentalgroup.com.au/health-insurance-payment-options-berwick\)\\*](https://www.coredentalgroup.com.au/health-insurance-payment-options-berwick).

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