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# How to straighten teeth: Everything you need to know:

FOR DR. ROZE BIOHEALTH CLINICS | FRIDAY August 19 , 2022

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*Misaligned teeth can negatively affect your physical and mental health. Here's what you need to know about how to straighten teeth.*

Having misaligned teeth, also known as malocclusion, can cause health problems and body image issues, according to the University of Michigan's Michigan Medicine.

## 1/- Why do people want their teeth straightened?

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“In addition to the cosmetic benefit of an attractive smile and the emotional benefit of greater self-confidence, the health benefits of straight teeth include the ability to keep your mouth cleaner and the proper alignments of your joints,” Isabel Suastegui-Mursuli, DDS, tells WebMD Connect to Care.

A clean mouth and aligned jawbones make it easier to maintain your dental health. “Straightened teeth mean that gums are more easily cleaned due to fewer cracks and crevices to get food particles and plaque buildup,” Oleg Drut, DDS, an orthodontist at Diamond Braces, tells WebMD Connect to Care.

Proper alignment of your mandibles and joints also helps the muscles in your face function properly, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine. This makes doing things like chewing food, swallowing, carrying out conversations, and yawning happen smoothly.

## 2/- What are your options to straighten teeth?

- **Dental Aligners**

Dental aligners, also known as “clear aligners,” are removable custom-made mouthpieces that fit over your teeth. You wear several slightly different versions that gradually shift your teeth into alignment.

“I like clear aligners because they offer many benefits, such as better home care, less of an impact on the quality of life, increased comfort, and [being] easier to maintain,” Drut says.

- **Braces**

Braces are metal or ceramic brackets that are attached to each tooth with flexible wires and adjusted to align teeth over time.

They come in the form of traditional metal brackets, tooth-colored ceramic brackets, or brackets made of clear materials.

• Retainers

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Though they are commonly used after teeth have been straightened with braces, an orthodontist may recommend retainers to correct minor issues with misalignment. Removable retainers are less visible than braces but more visible than dental aligners. While this can make them an attractive option, remember that your dental professional will need to do a clinical exam and imaging diagnostics to determine what's best for your individual treatment.

Suastegui-Mursuli says the effectiveness of different teeth-straightening methods comes down to how closely you follow the treatment plan.

“As you can remove aligners, it is much easier to keep your teeth clean,” Suastegui-Mursuli says. “When you have brackets, it is much more labor-intensive to get your teeth and gum line clean,” Suastegui-Mursuli says. “Yet this same ease of removal is the major drawback to aligners: They are easy to remove, so patients are not often fully compliant.”



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