

PATIENT GUIDE

Cleaning and looking after your aligners

Keeping trays clear and fresh, and the one habit that stops them being lost. · 30 Aug 2026

An aligner is a thin, clear plastic shell that spends 22 hours a day in a warm, wet mouth. Rinse it every time it comes out, brush it gently morning and night, and it stays clear and odour-free for its week. Keep it in its case every time it is out of your mouth and it will not get lost.

Every day

1. Rinse when it comes out

Cool water, every time. It stops saliva drying on the tray and keeps it clear.

2. Brush the tray morning and night

A soft toothbrush and cool water, or a drop of clear liquid soap. Inside and out, then rinse well. No toothpaste: most are abrasive and cloud the plastic.

3. Brush your teeth before it goes back in

Or at least rinse well if you are out. A tray over unbrushed teeth holds sugar and plaque against the enamel for hours.

4. Case, every time

Trays in a napkin end up in a bin. Trays in a pocket crack. The case goes where you go: a spare in the school bag or the car helps.

Keeping them clear

Water only while trays are in. Coffee, tea, red wine, cola and juice stain them and sit against the teeth. If a tray does discolour, a cleaning tablet made for aligners or retainers in cool water for the time on the packet brings it back. Never hot water, never bleach, never the dishwasher: heat warps a tray so it no longer fits.

Good to know

- A tray that smells has plaque on it. Brush it more thoroughly, particularly along the gum edge.
- Slight cloudiness by the end of a week is normal. You change to a fresh one anyway.
- Pets love aligners. Keep the case closed and out of reach.