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From Editor's Desk

Dear Readers, Greetings!

What we are missing with clear aligners



Clear aligners have revolutionized orthodontics, offering a discreet and convenient alternative to traditional metal bracket appliances. With their ability to gradually shift teeth into place using a series of transparent trays, aligners have become a popular choice, particularly for adults and teenagers looking for a less noticeable treatment option. However, while clear aligners offer undeniable benefits, they come with certain limitations that we may be overlooking.

One of the primary shortcomings of clear aligners is the lack of precise control over tooth movement compared to traditional braces. Braces use brackets and wires that can apply consistent, directed pressure to individual teeth, allowing for more intricate adjustments. Clear aligners, on the other hand, rely on a plastic tray that fits over the teeth, which can make it harder to address complex dental issues, such as severe crowding, bite problems, tipping or rotational misalignments. In these cases, a fully bonded conventional appliance might be more effective at achieving the desired outcome.

Another challenge is patient compliance. Aligners must be worn for 20-22 hours a day to be effective, which can be difficult for some people, especially younger patients. The aligners are removable, making it tempting to skip wear during meals or social situations. Any deviation from this (e.g., wearing them less than required) can delay treatment. This makes them less suitable for individuals who may struggle with adherence or forgetfulness. Any inconsistency in usage can lead to delayed treatment and unsatisfactory results.

Although some aligner systems claim to be faster than braces, treatment time can still be comparable, and in certain cases, treatment may take longer due to inconsistent wear. In younger patients who are still growing, clear aligners may not be as effective as braces in addressing bite issues that require more comprehensive tooth movement.

Lastly clear aligners lack the real-time, hands-on monitoring that braces provide. While aligner treatment is typically managed remotely, periodic check-ups with a professional are still necessary. However, in-office visits offer more opportunities for professionals to assess progress and make immediate adjustments, something that aligners cannot provide as effectively.

In conclusion, while clear aligners are a fantastic tool for many, they are not a one-size-fits-all solution. The benefits of traditional braces—precision, control, and professional oversight—are still critical elements of orthodontic care for certain cases.

Happy Reading.

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