

— April Durrett

Not Your Grandmother's Braces

When you think of braces today, with tiny brackets, space-age wires and trendy rubber bands in a rainbow of colors, it's hard to imagine how braces used to be — or that they even existed — a century ago. Yet, this year the American Association of Orthodontists celebrates 100 years of creating healthy, beautiful smiles!

Where once braces meant a mouth full of shiny metal, now there are several options, notes David Alpan, DDS, MSD, a Los Angeles specialist in contemporary orthodontic methods. "In the past, clear braces would sometimes turn yellow," he explains. "Now they are made out of a crystal material so they don't stain and there's less chance of breaking."

Adults who are in the entertainment industry or in a sales or executive job often choose the clear braces, says Dr. Alpan. However, he notes that especially high-profile people will often choose lingual braces that go on the back of the teeth. Or, patients who only have minor crowding of the teeth will choose the Invisalign, non-braces option. Dr. Alpan explains: "Invisalign is a thin, plastic retainer that eliminates the need for braces.



Thermal-activated wires are placed in the mouth. When they increase in temperature, the wire gets stiffer and delivers a light force over a long period of time which then causes less pain when moving the teeth."

Dr. Alpan also works with adults who have TMJ problems. He's one of LA's top experts on preventing and correcting TMJ as he wrote his master's degree thesis on this topic. Many times he will recommend that patients receive different therapies to correct TMJ and then prescribe braces to align the teeth to stabilize the TMJ treatment.

Dr. Alpan has two offices: one in Beverly Hills and one near St. Vincent's Hospital. Contact him at (310) 888-0066 or (213) 382-8228 for further information about the latest in orthodontic techniques.