

Choosing a Scanner for the Orthodontic Practice

While orthodontic, restorative and implant-borne restorative cases can all benefit from an intraoral scanner, the features that are important for one procedure may be less so for another. For example, because orthodontic staff must capture the full mouth—and are often working with younger patients—a **faster, more ergonomic intraoral scanner** may be more important than for a general practitioner who is designing a crown.

On top of that, there are a number of quality intraoral scanners on the market, which can make choosing one for the orthodontic practice more difficult. This chart may help shed light on the features you should look for, the **benefits to your practice** and the questions you should ask the sales representative during your purchasing process.

Features	Benefits	Questions to Ask
Speed	One of the greatest benefits of intraoral scanners is their overall efficiency, as digital models can be generated in minutes and the completed dataset can be either sent to a lab immediately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the scanner require powder spray to achieve fast scanning speeds? • What is the average time to scan both arches plus a bite registration? • Is the scanner both fast and accurate, or does the speed impact accuracy? • Is the scanner capable of scanning patients in appliances? • Can the dataset be easily sent to the lab of the doctor's choice for the manufacturing of the appliances?
Ergonomic Design	When you consider that many orthodontic patients have smaller mouths—and that the entire mouth must be scanned—it becomes very apparent that an ergonomic design will facilitate more comfortable scanning and improve the patient experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will users be able to easily capture the full arch in one continuous motion? • Does the scanner come with different tip styles and sizes to accommodate patients with smaller mouths?
Ease of use	Each user has a different method of scanning. By choosing a scanner that adapts to the user's preferred scanning style, rather than one that requires a specific protocol, you can ensure that scanning will be easy for all members of your team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the scanner require a fixed distance, or can users choose whether to hover above or rest the scanner on a tooth? • Does the scanner provide real-time feedback, so users can easily go back and capture any missing information?
Price	Switching to an intraoral scanner can eliminate the costs associated with traditional impressions and reduce the risk of retakes. In the long run, your investment in this technology can deliver a positive ROI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any additional fees that I will incur with this scanner?

Integration	Clear aligners have become popular amongst teenagers and adults. Choosing a scanner that integrates well with third-party manufacturers opens up treatment options for your patients. Not only that, but a scanner that integrates with your practice management software ensures you can easily access all of your patients' information from one system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this scanner part of a closed or open system? • What are the file formats that scans can be saved in? • Which companies have been validated for use with your scanner? • Will your scanner integrate with my practice management system?
Warranty	Many orthodontic professionals find the intraoral scanner to be a tool they use on a daily basis. A good warranty will ensure you're protected should anything happen to your scanner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is included in your basic warranty? • Are extended warranties available?
Training	Quickly learning how to use your new intraoral scanner will ensure you can begin maximizing its use right after implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of training programs are available? Are they online? In person? • Do you offer any initial feedback from CAD/CAM specialists to ensure scans are being performed correctly?
Support and Service	Being able to quickly access technical support can reduce the risk of downtime caused by malfunctioning technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of support services are offered? Are they over the phone? Online? • What are your support team's hours of operation?

Scanners offer a tremendous number of benefits to orthodontic professionals—choosing the right one can bring even more advantages.