

Get the most out of a dental visit

How do I prepare for a dental visit

Get a good night's sleep.

If you are prone to dental anxiety, eat a high-protein snack and avoid caffeinated or sugary beverages on the day of your visit to help calm you.

If your dental visit coincides with your usual mealtime, bring a healthy snack to munch on.

Wear loose fitting, comfortable clothing.

Bring a list of medications (name and dosage), as well as the names of your recent and current health care practitioners. Additionally, alert your dentist of any medical conditions you have been diagnosed with.

Jot down any questions you think of on a notepad.

What happens during an exam?

Expect your dentist to perform a thorough examination, detect potential problems, and provide an appropriate treatment plan. An initial examination may include some or all of the following procedures: a soft tissue examination; a screening and examination for periodontal diseases; and a detailed charting of cavities, existing restorations (fillings and crowns), and other tooth conditions; and an oral cancer screening. Dental X-rays also may be taken to locate any abnormalities or injuries that cannot be detected through a visual exam.

Is it important to share a complete medical history?

Yes. Even if you've seen the same dentist for years, communicate any changes in your mouth or medical conditions that have been recently diagnosed. Health conditions, medications--even vitamins- can interfere with routine dental procedures. If you have a medical condition, such as heart-valve problems, recent total joint replacement, or insulin- dependent diabetes, your dentist may prescribe antibiotics before your dental visit to prevent the spread of bacteria. These procedures could include professional teeth cleaning, extractions and implant surgery. If you are a cancer patient undergoing chemotherapy, it is important to inform your dentist about your condition. According to the National Institutes of Health, 40 percent of cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy experience oral complications including salivary gland dysfunction, which leads to dry mouth, rampant dental decay, and painful mouth sores. The more your dentist knows about your medical history and overall health, the better he or she is able to develop a personalized dental treatment plan to help improve your quality of life.

Are routine visits necessary?

Yes. Make sure to get regular dental checkups at least every six months to maintain healthy teeth and gums. But it is important to know that achieving optimum oral health requires more than regular checkups: It requires you to be an informed patient and an active participant in your own health. Ask your dentist questions about results from your checkup and any recommended treatment. If you have researched an oral health problem, the information you gather can help you identify health concerns and ask the right questions.

Do I need to discuss payment arrangements before my visit?

Payment requirements vary with each dental office, so it's a good idea to discuss this with the receptionist before your visit. Making payment arrangements ahead of time also can help reduce pre-visit related stress. If possible, find out what services your dental insurance covers. Ask whether we accept this kind of insurance and about what payment options are offered. Also, please note that there is a difference between accepting your insurance and participating with your insurance. Patients who have PPO's can go to any dentist you accepts insurance; however, they will have a lower copayment if their dentist participates with that particular plan. We do participate with several PPO plans.

What if I need to cancel my appointment?

If you cannot keep a scheduled dental appointment, don't wait until the last minute to cancel or not show up at all. Since staff has set up a specific time slot for your oral health care, you should provide as much notice of cancellation as possible. Our cancellation policy will be given to you during your first visit. While some emergencies may make it difficult to provide advance notice, 48 hours is recommended.