

# HOW TO CONQUER YOUR FEAR OF THE DENTIST

Everyone wants a healthy and beautiful smile. But fear and anxiety about visiting the dentist can prevent people from accomplishing this goal.

About 9%–20% of all Americans avoid the dentist because of dental anxiety and fear.\*

If you have a fear of the dentist, don't give up hope. No matter how challenging your fears may be, there are resources available to help you.



**20%**  
fear dentists  
and don't go

## What causes dental fears?

Avoidance of the dentist can stem from dental anxiety and fear. Both of these are reactions to unknown danger. It's also possible you might not even know what causes these strong feelings.

Some common reasons people are afraid of going to the dentist include:\*\*

- ▶ Pain
- ▶ Loss of control (the fact that you can't get up and leave in the middle of the treatment, or the inability to totally communicate while you're being treated)
- ▶ Fear of dental equipment
- ▶ Fear of dentist
- ▶ Fear of loud noises
- ▶ Choking or gagging
- ▶ Previous unpleasant experience with a dentist

However personal and meaningful your fears may be, you should realize that your dentist is trained and familiar with these fears, and able to help you face them.

**Together, all the way.®**



## Why is it important to overcome my dental fear?

Getting regular check-ups, cleanings and X-rays is critical to your oral health and overall health. Research has shown an association between gum disease and serious medical conditions, including diabetes and heart disease. Poor oral health can also cause other, more common problems such as bad breath, poor speech and digestion.

## What are some ways to deal with fear of the dentist?

- › Talk with your dentist about your fears in advance of treatment – communication about fear is key.\*\*
- › Relaxation and hypnosis – often, listening to calming music can help.\*\*\*
- › Talk with a licensed behavioral health professional about your fears. Many employers offer an employee assistance program staffed with behavioral health professionals who can help you deal with your fear.

- › Meet with your dentist for a consultation before starting any treatment. Write down your feelings and questions and share them with your dentist.
- › If you're concerned about the cost of your treatment, ask your dentist about a payment plan. Although most procedures are covered at reasonable charges, many dentists will work with patients whose financial issues prevent them from getting necessary dental care.
- › New equipment and treatment methods make procedures that were once considered uncomfortable go more quickly and pleasantly than you may have experienced in the past.

If you're afraid of going to the dentist, you're not alone. Overcoming your fears with the techniques described above can leave you feeling more in control of your own health.



**So go ahead and get that beautiful, healthy, white smile.**



\*"Easing Dental Fear in Adults." WebMD. Accessed January 2019. <<https://www.webmd.com/oral-health/easing-dental-fear-adults#1>>.

\*\*"Why People Are Afraid of the Dentist and How to Help." Dental Brothers Family to Family Care. July 2018. <<https://www.dentalbrothers.com/why-people-are-afraid-of-the-dentist-and-how-to-help/>>.

\*\*\*"5 Tips for Dealing with Dental Anxiety." Dental Brothers Family to Family Care. January 2018. <<https://www.dentalbrothers.com/tips-for-handling-dental-anxiety/>>.

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