

Afraid of the Dentist?

Are you afraid to go to the dentist? **You aren't alone!** As many as 80 percent of American adults report being afraid to go to the dentist. And, although it is a common fear, you don't want to let it keep you from getting the dental care you need to stay healthy.

Here are some tips to help you overcome your fears and relax the next time you visit your dentist:

- **Talk to your dental providers about your fears.**

If they know that you have concerns, they can work with you to address them. Ask questions so you know what to expect.

- **Avoid caffeine and sugar before going to the dentist.**

These can make you nervous and increase your feelings of anxiety. Instead, try to eat high-protein foods, which may actually help calm you.

- **Make a conscious effort to relax.**

Take deep, measured breaths and try to focus on something that calms and relaxes you like a favorite place, memory, or song.

- **Be in control!**

Schedule your appointment at a time when you are most likely to be relaxed and not feel stressed or rushed. Arrange a signal (like raising your hand) that you can give if you are feeling uncomfortable or panicky. Ask to take a break if needed.

Don't let fear keep you from taking care of your teeth and gums!

Sources: Nayda Rondon, "Dental Anxiety and Phobia," Consumer Guide to Dentistry; Richard Sine, "Don't Fear the Dentist," WebMD

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