

# Are you still afraid of the dentist?



See your  
dentist  
regularly.

## Try meeting your fear face to face.

Being nervous or apprehensive about dental treatment, or just disliking the experience, can be a significant barrier to receiving the care you need.

The first step for an apprehensive patient is to acknowledge their fears and be ready to overcome them. Arrange a dental appointment to discuss what most concerns you and to develop strategies to cope with treatment. It's easy to be afraid of something you don't know about. A better understanding of modern dentistry can alleviate your fears. Today, new techniques in dentistry make it more comfortable than ever. It's virtually painless.

Your first appointment may not involve any treatment. You may not even have your teeth cleaned. It could be limited to a discussion of your apprehension and planning to overcome this barrier to a lifetime of dental health.

### What might be discussed?

#### Your main concern

What are you most apprehensive about: The drill? The injection? Stories you have heard about some procedures? Or, possibly just "the whole experience". Once specific concerns are identified you and your dentist can develop strategies to cope with them.

#### Your past experiences

Most apprehensive patients have had a difficult experience or are intimately aware of the experiences of someone close to them. Times and treatment methods have changed. These past experiences may or may not be relevant to your current situation. Getting the facts about your particular needs can save a lot of needless worry.

### Coping strategies for dealing with treatment

There are many and varied ways of overcoming apprehension as a barrier to good dental health. Things such as time of day and length of your appointments should be discussed. You may want someone to accompany you during treatment for support. It is important to develop a signal to use if you need to stop treatment when you need a break. Some patients find the more they know about their treatment the easier it is for them. Others find the information upsetting and want to know as little as possible. For some people, the barriers are too high and too difficult. Medications to relax or sedate you may be required. These are just a few of the issues to be discussed before treatment begins to determine what will work best for you.

### Fees for your treatment

Strategies for coping with apprehensions can affect the fees for treatment. For patients with dental insurance these are fees that may not be a benefit of your plan.

Modifications in treatment and fees may be necessary due to unforeseen factors encountered at the time of treatment. It will not be possible to discuss this with you if you have been sedated.

If you prefer that unplanned treatment be deferred please let the dentist know prior to sedation being administered. Be aware that deferred treatment will require duplication of the time, fees, and risks associated with sedation.

### Delaying the inevitable

For a variety of reasons coming late and missing appointments is very common amongst apprehensive patients. Unfortunately, this can lead to treatment dragging out over time; a deterioration of the teeth and gums as active disease goes unattended, leading to needing more treatment; and fees for the lost and additional time. In general, making a bad situation worse and easily avoided.

People who overcome their fear of dental care realize benefits beyond their dental health. Many are justly proud of this difficult accomplishment and can't wait to brag to others.

**To dispel your fears,  
talk to your dentist.  
We care about you  
and your teeth.**

This information courtesy of your Manitoba Dentist