Don’t let fear get in the way of your oral health

Dental anxiety: What you should know

It’s common to feel a little nervous about going to the dentist. But if those nerves ever get so overwhelming that they cause you to delay appointments or cancel them altogether, you may be suffering from dental anxiety. Here are some tips and information to help you overcome dental anxiety so you can keep up with your regular dental visits, which are a key part of maintaining your oral health.*

Identify your fears
Understanding the root of your anxiety is important so that you can communicate and address it specifically. Some common reasons for fear include:
- Pain
- Previous traumatic dental experiences
- Loss of control
- History of generalized anxiety disorder
- Lack of trust in dentist
- Needles and drilling
- Invasion of personal space
- Anesthesia wearing off or having side effects

Recognize the signs and symptoms
People living with dental anxiety have more extreme nerves about going to the dentist, which can lead to symptoms, such as:
- Heart palpitations
- Panic attacks
- Drop in blood pressure
- Aggressive behavior
- Excessive sweating
- Crying
- Feeling faint

Learn healthy coping strategies that can help
Here are some simple things you can do to help ease your anxiety and get you in the dentist’s chair.

Speak up – When you call your dentist’s office to schedule your appointment, let them know if you’re feeling anxious. They can answer any questions you might have and may also be able to suggest ways to help you relax before and during your visit. You can also speak to a dentist beforehand via Cigna Dental Virtual Care by logging in to your myCigna account.**

Practice mindfulness – There are many techniques that can help you relax your mind, such as breathing exercises, meditation and visualization. Determine which one works best for you.

Bring a distraction – See if you can watch TV or a movie or listen to music through headphones during your appointment.

Tap into your support system – Ask a close friend or family member to come with you to your appointment. You dentist may even allow them to come into the exam room with you; just ask.

Ask about your medication options – You may have multiple medication options to consider, including nitrous oxide (laughing gas), oral anxiety medication, oral sedatives and dental anesthesia. Talk to your doctor or dentist about any that may be right for you.

Schedule a check-up today
To find an in-network dentist near you, go to myCigna.com.

** Cigna provides access to virtual care through national teledental care providers via myCigna.com as part of your plan. Providers are solely responsible for any treatment provided to their patients. Video chat may not be available in all areas or with all providers and is a requirement for this service. See your plan materials for the details of your specific dental plan. This service is separate from coverage for virtual dental care obtained by your dental plan’s network and may not be available in all areas. A referral is not required for this service.

Together, all the way.*

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