

Ways to relieve dental anxiety

If you dread going to the dentist, ask about anxiety-reducing techniques you can use to help stay calm and relaxed. Some effective strategies follow.

- Tell your dentist how you feel. Ask questions to help reduce fears of the unknown. Agree on a signal to let your dentist know you need a brief pause during the procedure.
- Distract yourself. Wear headphones to listen to calming music or audiobook, or squeeze a stress ball.
- Use breathing exercises or other mindfulness techniques to help calm your mind.
- If your anxiety is more than you can handle, see a licensed therapist who specializes in treating dental anxiety and other phobias.

Have a routine cleaning and checkup every six months. Preventive care will minimize the need for more painful and lengthy treatment.

