

# DENTAL HEALTH

## How to Overcome Anxiety at the Dentist

(NAPS)—If you experience anxiety and stress while visiting your dentist, you're not alone. For many people, the idea of going to the dentist stirs up anxiety; however, it's so important to combat those thoughts to keep your smile strong and healthy. To help, here are four tips so you can remain calm while your teeth receive care:

**Talk to your dentist**—Be open about your anxieties and stress before the appointment so the dentist can ease your mind. If you want to know what's happening during the appointment, they can explain the procedure to you. If you would rather not know, your dentist can tell you when to close your eyes or distract yourself. Work on a signal with your dentist—for instance, if you raise your hand during your appointment, it could mean you need a break, or something hurts. Don't be afraid to communicate what you need for a successful trip to the dentist's chair.

**Use tools to distract yourself**—If the tools or sounds of the dental machines cause you anxiety, find ways to busy yourself. You can bring headphones to listen to your favorite music or podcast while you lounge in the dentist's chair. Objects such as stress balls or fidget spinners are also a great way to keep busy.

**Practice mindfulness**—To keep your mind off your dentist's appointment, you can practice mindfulness both before and during. Focus on



**Keeping your mind at ease while your teeth get cleaned may be easier than you realize.**

breathing while you're in the waiting room or in the dentist's chair with slow, deep breaths. Relax all the muscles you can, one at a time, with a body scan. Start from your feet all the way up to your neck and shoulders while you're reclined for your appointment.

**Bring a friend**—Do not feel embarrassed or shy to ask for support! If you have a trusted friend or family member who makes you feel safe, see if they can help you in facing your fear of the dentist.

While these tips may not get rid of dental anxiety completely, they are a great place to start so any patient can conquer any dentist appointment.

### Learn More

For more information on your oral health, visit Delta Dental of Washington's blog at [www.deltadentalwa.com](http://www.deltadentalwa.com).