Tips to Overcome Fear of the Dentist & Dental Anxiety

It’s common for patients to feel dental anxiety or uneasiness before or during their dental appointments. Here are some tips to help you overcome your fear of the dentist:

- Talk with your dentist and/or dental hygienist about your dental anxiety so they can explain what the procedure really entails and you know what to expect. They’re there to make your experience as comfortable and stress-free as possible.
- Patients often say that their fears were worse than the actual procedure and that if they’d only known what to expect they would have been less anxious.
- Wear headphones during your appointment to help block out sounds. Be sure to discuss this with your dentist or dental hygienist prior to your appointment.
- Request a numbing agent. Your dental hygienist and dentist can often apply a numbing gel or use a local anesthesia to minimize pain.
- Everyone’s pain threshold is different. Don’t be afraid to ask for a numbing agent if you weren’t offered one or if you’re in pain—your dentist will not want to proceed unless you’re comfortable.
- Ask about anti-anxiety medication. Some practices offer patients anti-anxiety medication to help reduce dental anxiety during the appointment. Please ask your dentist before the day of your visit about anti-anxiety medications.
- Your dentist can also use the monitor to show you your x-rays and to help you to better understand your procedure.
- Bring someone you trust to your appointment to help provide comfort and reduce dental anxiety.
- Arrive early to your appointment. Stress management can start just by reading a magazine in the waiting room.