## What to do after your dental visit

- Take some time to think about how it went.
- Think about what you felt and what you learned:
  - How comfortable do you feel with how you were treated?
  - How well did the dental team listen to you during the visit?
  - How well did you understand your dental care plan and the instructions given?
  - What other information, support, or options do you need at this time?

## Resources

- **National Hotline on Domestic Violence**: Confidential relationship support 24/7/365 www.thehotline.org 800-799-7233, Text START to 88788
- **Find a health center or dental clinic**: https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov
- **Give Back a Smile Program**: https://www.givebackasmile.com
- **Dental Lifeline Network**: dentallifeline.org
- **Smiles for Success**: smilesforsuccess.org

## Advocating for yourself during your dental visit

- Communicate with your dental team about your concerns and worries.
- Answering questions or sharing something is always your choice.
- Your trust is something to be earned by your dental team.

Before and during the dental visit, try talking to your dental team about what would make you feel more comfortable. For example:

- "I need a break. Can we continue after I have a few minutes to myself?"
- "Can you explain how this question is relevant to my oral health?"
- "Can you explain each step as you go through the visit?"

## Care for yourself before and/or after your dental visit



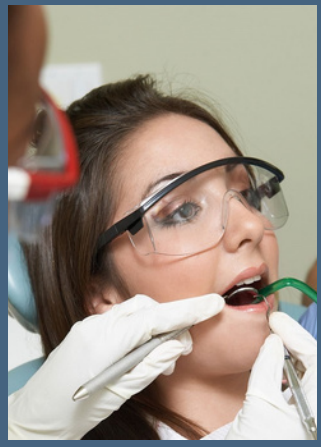
- Move your body
- Ground yourself through breath
- Connect with loved ones

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Updated 2026

# A Health Guide and Support for Dental Visits







NNOHA National Network for Oral Health Access
HEALTH PARTNERS ON IPV + EXPLOITATION

## Why is going to the dental clinic hard for me, or for someone I care about?

You may know someone who hasn't had a dental appointment in years, maybe this is true for you, too. There are different reasons why people delay a visit to a dental provider, including fear, financial barriers, or lack of access to a nearby dental clinic.

Experiences of abuse or trauma during childhood and being hurt or controlled by a partner as an adult could be reasons you may feel fear, anxiety, and worry about seeing a dental provider.

A dental provider may have shared this brochure with you as a first step to support you in having a comfortable visit.



## Prepare for your dental visit

- When asked about your medical history, bring a list of current medications and recent conditions.
- Come with questions and identify your priorities for your oral health.
- You may be asked about your current oral health status (experiences from last dental provider, brushing habits, diet, etc).
- Many health centers help with transportation.
- Health centers adjust fees based on finances; everyone is welcome regardless of insurance or ability to pay.
- Many health centers offer care in multiple languages. Interpretation and translation services are provided as needed.

## What do I want from this dental visit?

- The plan for the dental visit and any future visits.
- Explanation of your oral health status.
- Recommended next steps and treatment plan.

## What are other ways I can access dental care?

It might feel intimidating to find or visit a dental clinic. There are many ways that you can access dental care as a starting point:

**Telehealth appointments** - Many dental clinics offer telehealth appointments. Telehealth appointments can be a first step in getting to know a new dental team, sharing your concerns, and learning about what will happen during an in-person dental visit.

**Talk to your medical team** - If you have a medical provider, you can talk to them about your dental health. Many of them can recommend a dental provider that they trust. Also, medical providers can provide support on how to improve your oral health.

See the Resources section of this brochure for help finding local, affordable dental clinics.