



What to Expect During Your Oral Care Visit? For the Adult Patient

On your first dental visit:

- Arrive 15 minutes early to fill out paperwork. Have your insurance and photo ID available, as well as a current list of medications
- A full health history will be reviewed. Answer all questions honestly and completely. Your safety and health depend on a trusting relationship with your provider.
- Expect your blood pressure to be taken.
- Expect a thorough exam of your head/neck, teeth, gums, surrounding tissue, and skin.
- A complete set of X-rays may need to be taken.
- Expect a diagnosis of the condition of your teeth and gums.
- A plan of care is usually developed and reviewed with you about what corrective treatments need to be done.
- Do not expect a dental cleaning at the first visit if it has been several years since your last visit.

Follow up visits:

- Arrive on time.
- If your medical history or medications have changed, tell your dentist or hygienist.
- Expect to have updates of X-rays, blood pressure, and oral cancer exam.

How often should I see my dental professional?

- Always follow the advice of your dentist or hygienist. The return visits after active treatment are personalized and based on your history and risk for oral disease.

Should I ask what measures my dental office takes to prevent the spread of infection?

- Yes! You should ask and get understandable answers. You need to feel comfortable with your care setting.

Some easy things to look for are:

- Handwashing before and after gloving.
- Protective equipment, such as gloves, eyewear, masks, and long-sleeved lab coats or disposable gowns, are used with every patient.
- Ask your dentist about the sterilization process used in their practice.
- Disposable items, like needles, are NEVER reused and dental instruments should be in sealed packages.
- All surfaces should appear clean.

- There should be no food items in the clinic area.

My dental professional tells me to close around the “straw” to remove water and debris more quickly. Is this okay?

- No. The dentist or hygienist should not advise you to close your lips tightly around the suction. This may cause the liquid in the tubing to flow backward and be pulled into your mouth. This is known as *backflow*.

Are dental X-rays safe?

- Dental X-rays are the best way to diagnose cavities between the teeth and periodontal (gum) disease, and radiation exposure from dental X-rays is very low. We receive approximately an equal amount of radiation daily just from our environment.

Should I ask if my dental provider holds a current license to practice in my state?

- Yes, you can ask to see it! Dentists and dental hygienists hold a state license with the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation.
- Their current license **must** be on display in his or her place of employment.

Should I report any suspicious practices or unlicensed dental providers?

- Yes! Always protect yourself and others. If things in the dental office cause concern or if the person working in your mouth does not have a license, report it to the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation <https://www.idfpr.com/>

Resources

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/dental-exam/basics/what-you-can-expect/prc-20013677>

American Dental Association

<http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/dental-care-concerns/questions-about-going-to-the-dentist>

<http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/dental-care-concerns/problems-with-your-dentist>