

# How to Prepare for Your Child's Dental Visit Now

Here are 10 bite-size tips:



## 1. Call ahead.

Call ahead. Get the doctor's recommendation for whether your child should be seen in the office or what other options there are.



## 2. Prepare for the visit.

Ask questions to understand expectations. Can you bring a sibling? Can you bring a favorite toy? Where will you wait? Will you and your child need to wear a mask? Understand if you will need to separate from your child during their visit and prepare your child accordingly.



## 3. Start at a very young age.

Practice makes perfect. The more often your child visits the dentist, the more accustomed he or she will become to the dental clinic and the staff. Tell your child in simple terms why it's important for children to visit the dentist: so their teeth can grow up to be big and strong.



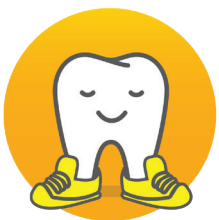
## 4. Do a pretend drive-by visit.

You can calm your child's dental anxiety by playacting a dentist's visit in the comfort of your home. Do a practice exam, counting your child's teeth while he or she holds a hand mirror. Practice wearing a face mask. Consider driving by the dentist's office to get acquainted with the idea of the visit. These activities can help reduce your child's worry factor.



## 5. Avoid words like "hurt" and "pain."

Frame the upcoming visit as a necessary trip, not a necessary evil. Avoid any mention of pain, crying or other emotional or physical discomfort. It would not only increase your child's dental anxiety, but it may also make it harder to get him or her into the car.



## 6. Think comfortable clothes.

Avoid making the mistake of thinking that your youngster needs to be dressed up. Instead, focus on comfort. Translation: Loose, comfy clothes or your child's favorite outfits are the best attire.



## 7. Avoid the "Hangry Monster."

Children are more easily upset when they're hungry or thirsty. Reduce the odds of this occurring during an office visit by filling that little tummy beforehand.



## 8. Be prepared to wait.

Be flexible; things can change. Wait times may be different. Where you wait may be different than before. Toys and magazines may not be available.



## 9. Describe the dental environment.

The dentist and staff may look different. They will be wearing extra protective gear, which you can describe as new costumes, like an astronaut or scuba diver. Remind your child these are the same people who will take good care of them.



## 10. Be encouraging.

Your demeanor during a visit to the dentist can have an enormous impact on your child's behavior. Be positive, encouraging, cheerful and attentive.

## Dentist visits are a learning occasion.

The main purpose of a dentist visit is to have a team of professionals examine your child's teeth and gums. But these visits are also a valuable opportunity for you to learn firsthand, from your dentist and hygienist, the proper techniques for brushing and flossing baby teeth and getting answers to any questions you may have. Remember: Your child's primary teeth are the foundation of their lifelong oral health.