

How to Make Your Child's Dentist Visits More Comfortable

Visiting the dentist and toothbrushing are important self-care activities to keep us healthy! For some kids, the dentist office is full of new sights, sounds and touches. Going to a new place and meeting new people can be scary at first, but with some helpful tips and a little planning a visit to the dentist can be fun. Here are some suggestions for before, during, and after your child's dentist appointment.

Before the appointment

- Read a story about visiting the dentist
- Watch a video about getting your teeth cleaned
- Visit the office and meet your dentist or hygienist before the appointment
- Act out a dentist visit by playing dentist with dolls, puppets or stuffed animals
- Ask if a caregiver can sit in the room during the appointment
- Jump on trampoline, climb, and swing
- Take a trip to the playground, gym, or swimming pool to release some energy
- Wear favorite comfortable clothing
 - Soft sweats or tight-fitting clothing
- Exercise your child's mouth
 - Blow bubbles or whistles
 - Drink through a straw
- Plan a reward after the appointment (office prize box or special activity)

During the appointment

Things your child can do:

- Bring a familiar item from home
- Fidget with a small spinner or squeeze toy in hand
- Place a bean bag animal or blanket on their lap
- Wear sunglasses
- Use headphones to block out noise or play music
- Take deep breaths

What caregivers can do:

- Offer to give hug breaks
- Have child sit or lay on your lap
- Provide verbal directions for steps throughout appointment
- Use a visual picture schedule for steps of the visit
- Set timers
- Offer small reward when each step/task of appointment is completed (sticker, high-five)



After the appointment

- Celebrate completing the dental visit
- Reinforce positive parts of the appointment
- Model excitement for next appointment
- Move around and play at a playground or gym
- Calm down at home by reading a book, coloring, or playing with playdoh
- Provide promised reward item or activity

If your child has been diagnosed with sensory processing difficulties, please visit this link for additional suggestions and support: [valleymed.org/Our-Services/Childrens-Therapy/Occupational-Therapy-\(Pediatric\)/](https://valleymed.org/Our-Services/Childrens-Therapy/Occupational-Therapy-(Pediatric)/)

Children's Therapy



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valleymed.org/childrenstherapy

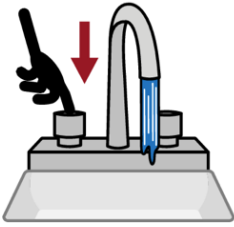




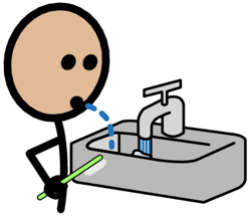

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My Toothbrushing Chart

Morning 							
Night 							

Toothbrushing Steps

1 Turn on Water		5 Brush Teeth	
2 Toothbrush		6 Brush Tongue	
3 Toothpaste		7 Spit	
4 Rinse Brush		8 Wipe	