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
- 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)/
# My Toothbrushing Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Sun" /></td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Night" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Toothbrushing Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Turn on Water</td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Water tap" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Toothbrush</td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Toothbrush" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Toothpaste</td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Toothpaste" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rinse Brush</td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Rinse" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Brush Teeth</td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Brushing teeth" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Brush Tongue</td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Brushing tongue" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Spit</td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Spitting" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Wipe</td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Wiping" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>