

2 - WHAT MIGHT HELP

Below you'll find a list of statements of things which might make it easier for you to see a dentist. This list is by no means exhaustive. You can mark the boxes to the left to highlight what's especially important to you. With some items, it can be difficult if not impossible to know if they would help before meeting a dentist you like – if you're not sure, just ignore those items for the time being. You can find suggestions on how various items might be dealt with in the "Common Dental Phobias" pages of www.dentalfearcentral.com.

(a) People

It might help me if...

I knew that the dentist would not make any negative remarks about my teeth or my oral hygiene, and would not be "phased" by the state of my mouth

the dentist was male / the dentist was female

the dentist was older / the dentist was younger

I knew that the dentist would not think it silly if I had a panic attack/started crying/shaking

I knew that the dentist would not "lecture" me

I could meet the dentist just for a chat, to see if I liked them

I could address my dentist by their first/Christian name

the dentist took things at my pace and would not force me into anything I'm not ready to do

the dentist could assure that treatment will be comfortable

the dentist was very gentle

the dentist was laid-back

the dentist was serious

- the dentist was very friendly
- the dentist didn't wear a white coat / formal clothes
- I could trust the dentist
- the dentist would allow me to explain my fears to them
- the dentist would respect my need not to be told everything up-front and would break "the bad news" gently
- the dentist was completely honest with me
- the dentist was very patient with me and didn't rush things
- I could work towards seeing a dentist with the help of a therapist or counsellor
- I could see a therapist or counselor for other problems I'm experiencing first
- I could learn relaxation or self-hypnosis techniques first
- my partner, a friend or family member could come into the treatment room with me
- my partner, a friend or family member would be with me in the waiting room
- a female dental assistant was present at all times
- the nurse held my hand
- the dentist touched my shoulder or arm reassuringly now and then
- the dentist or nurse touched me as little as possible
- I could let the dentist know about my fears in writing, because I'll be too tongue-tied

(b) Procedures:

It might help me if...

I would not be left waiting

I could have an appointment later in the day

I could have an appointment earlier in the morning

I knew I wouldn't have to sit in "the chair" during the first appointment.

the dentist could have a quick look first while I was not in the chair

the dentist wouldn't call out numbers when looking at my teeth

I knew that the dentist wouldn't use a "pick" (explorer)

the dentist would work out a signal with me, such as raising a hand, and would stop whenever I felt like taking a break

the dentist would allow me to "practice" giving the stop signal

the dentist knew some way of figuring out when I need a break or when I'm distressed, because I feel unable to give a stop signal

the dentist would stop frequently to ask me if I'm OK, and only continue if I give the go-ahead

the dentist explained to me in advance how a procedure will be done

the dentist talked to me as s/he works, explaining each step of the procedure and what I will feel

the dentist would do some small and easy procedures first so that I could learn to trust them

I knew that I'd be properly numbed, that treatment would be pain-free and that I like and trust my dentist

I would know as little as possible of what is going on

- I could have an anti-anxiety pill to allow me to attend my appointment
- I could be sedated during treatment
- the dentist would do all the "big work" during one or more longer appointments first, so that it would be out of the way
- I could have short appointments
- I think I'd prefer longer, but fewer appointments
- the dentist could show me why they suggest each treatment, what the alternatives are, and only proceed if I agreed with their suggestions
- the dentist showed me what instruments they were going to use, explain how they work and what noises they make before using them on me, provided it's not too scary for me
- I were allowed to hold the suction tool myself if possible
- I knew that there was a way of reducing/eliminating my gag reflex
- I could sit up during treatment (or certain parts of treatment)
- I could lie down during treatment
- Injections would not be used unless absolutely necessary
- a numbing gel would be applied first so I couldn't feel the needle going in
- I knew that the dentist was able to give painless injections
- I knew that the treatment would not involve pain

(c) Environment

It might help me if...

- I could use a disc-player or similar during treatment to blend out sounds
- I kept my eyes closed during treatment
- I could bring a blanket to cover myself during treatment
- I could watch TV/video during treatment
- there was music playing in the background
- instruments were hidden out of sight
- the door to the treatment room was left open
- there was no "dental practice smell" in the treatment room
- the treatment room didn't look too "clinical"

I would also need to know that

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Disclaimer: By using these sheets, you understand that they are for entertainment purposes only and are not intended to replace the advice of a qualified health professional. They may not address your particular circumstances. They were not written, nor have they been validated by, a health professional.