

# Your oral health is too important to ignore.



## How to overcome dental anxiety.

Dental cleanings are essential for maintaining optimal oral health and function. Dental cleanings also help achieve and maintain healthy teeth and gums.<sup>1</sup> But if strong feelings of uneasiness or anxiety are keeping you from visiting your dentist, here are some tips that can help.

### Identify your fears

Understanding the root of your anxiety is important. Think about your feelings, which may include fear of:

- Pain
- Needles and drilling
- Losing control
- Previous traumatic dental experiences
- Anesthesia wearing off, and more

### Understand why check-ups are important

Getting regular cleanings and routine X-rays can help:

- **Detect cavities or gum disease early.** This can help make treatment easier and less expensive.
- **Protect your overall health.** Research has linked gum disease to heart disease and diabetes.<sup>2</sup>
- **Detect early-stage oral cancer.** This is especially important if you smoke or use tobacco.<sup>3</sup>

### Learn healthy coping strategies

Here are some simple things you can do to help ease your anxiety and get you in the dentist's chair.

**Speak up** – Call your dental office ahead of time to let them know you're feeling anxious about your appointment. They may suggest ways to help you relax before and during your visit.

**Bring a distraction** – Put on headphones and listen to a relaxing podcast or music during your appointment.

**Ask about medication or sedation** – Talk to your dentist or doctor about what options you can consider, including nitrous oxide (laughing gas), oral anxiety medication, oral sedatives and dental anesthesia.

**Seek virtual care** – Connect to virtual dental care on **myCigna.com**<sup>®</sup> to speak with a dentist by phone or video<sup>4</sup> or try SmartScan, an at-home oral screening tool using your smartphone.

 **Schedule your dental check-up today. To find in-network care, visit [myCigna.com](https://myCigna.com).**

1. Cleveland Clinic. "Dental Cleaning." <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/11187-dental-check-up>. Page last reviewed January 13, 2023.

2. American Academy of Periodontology. "Gum Disease and Other Diseases." <https://www.perio.org/for-patients/gum-disease-information/gum-disease-and-other-diseases/>. Last Reviewed 2024.

3. Cleveland Clinic. "Oral Cancer." <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/11184-oral-cancer>. Page last reviewed: January 27, 2022.

4. Cigna Healthcare<sup>SM</sup> provides access to virtual care through national teledental care providers via [myCigna.com](https://myCigna.com) as part of your plan. Providers are solely responsible for any treatment provided to their patients. Video chat may not be available in all areas or with all providers and is a requirement for this service. See your plan materials for the details of your specific dental plan. This service is separate from coverage for virtual dental care obtained by your dental plan's network and may not be available in all areas. A referral is not required for this service.

Customers under age 13 (and/or their parent/guardian) will not be able to register at [myCigna.com](https://myCigna.com).

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