



*What to Expect at Your  
First Dental Visit*

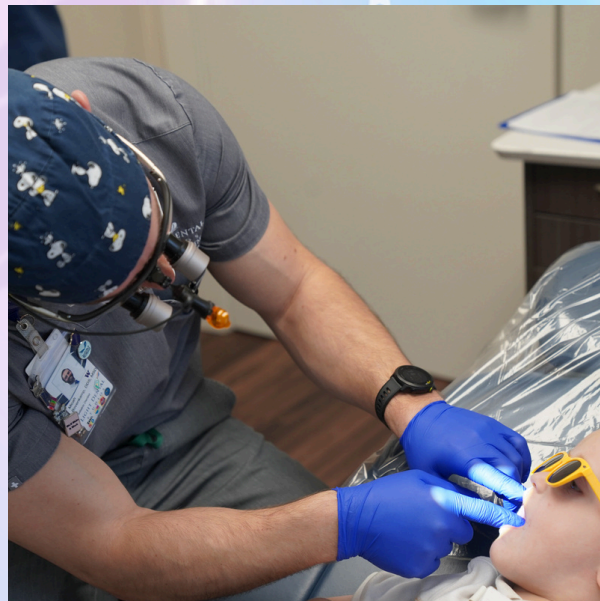




*What is  
a dentist,  
anyway?*



Have you ever been to the doctor's office? The dentist's office is very similar, except the people there only take care of teeth! Dentists are experts in keeping your teeth healthy in every possible way. If your teeth are dirty or hurting, they're the ones to go to! Dentists can fix broken teeth, straighten them, and even brighten them!



# 1 Teeth Cleaning

The first person you'll meet at the dentist's office is the dental assistant! Dental assistants are in charge of cleaning your teeth. They'll place their hands in your mouth, as well as special tools and liquid.

These tools can look sharp and the liquids can taste funny, but they aren't meant to hurt you! If you're ever uncomfortable, you can always ask for a break. It's important, though, to get your teeth professionally cleaned twice a year. That's how we keep our teeth happy and healthy!



Let's learn

about dental tools!



This is a toothbrush and toothpaste! They're the frontline defense against plaque (AKA: sugarbugs)!



This is floss! It comes in many forms--from strands to picks--but its purpose is always the same: to clean the hard-to-reach places between your teeth.



These are fluoride brushes! Fluoride is a chemical that helps your teeth fight off cavities.



These are paper bibs! They're placed around your neck at the dentist to prevent liquid from staining your clothes.



These are sunglasses! The dentist will offer these to you to protect your eyes from the bright lights of the office.



This is a mirror! Good for seeing teeth way in the back.



This is an explorer! It looks sharp, but it's just for cleaning and checking for cavities.



This is a drill! If a dentist uses it, you'll feel a bit of vibration.



This is an saliva ejector (AKA: Mr. Thirsty)! The dental assistant will put this in your mouth to remove liquid.



This is an X-ray machine! It's a cool invention that lets doctors see stuff inside your body.



This is a face mask! It's a device medical professionals wear on their faces to filter out germs.



These are disposable gloves! They assure a dentist's hands stay clean and dry.



# 2

## Examination

After your teeth are all cleaned up, the dentist will come in for the examination! Their job is to review your X-rays, measure your teeth and gums, and check for cavities.

This process involves the dentist pressing down on your teeth and prodding the area around your gums. It can feel a bit uncomfortable, but it shouldn't hurt. If the dentist determines you need a filling or another procedure done, the office will schedule a follow-up after the examination.



## Things you might hear

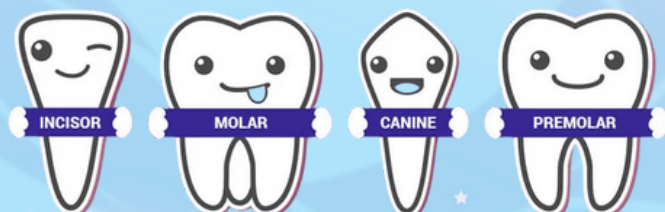
### during an examination:

#### 1. Random numbers.

Dentists will count your teeth and the length of your gums out loud. The dental assistant will then record these numbers on a computer for future reference.

#### 2. Scientific names for teeth.

The general public doesn't usually refer to teeth by their scientific names... but dentists do! Dentists/dental assistants need to be specific so they can be sure they're treating the correct teeth.



#### 3. Questions about your health.

At some point prior to or during your visit, the dentist will ask you questions regarding your medical history, including conditions, allergies, and previous procedures--even those not involving your teeth! It's important to have a well-rounded understanding of the patient, after all.

#### 4. "Fluoride."

Fluoride is a natural mineral often added to drinking water and toothpaste. When applied to the teeth, it helps prevent tooth decay and strengthens enamel. You may have enough exposure to fluoride already; but if not, the dentist can supplement your treatment by painting fluoride directly onto your teeth during a dental visit.



#### 5. "Underbite" or "overbite."

The dentist may refer to your teeth as having an "underbite" or an "overbite." This means your bottom teeth are covering your top teeth or the other way around. Underbites/overbites aren't necessarily bad; but in certain cases, they can cause jaw pain. Talk to your dentist if you're interested in tools that can help.

#### 6. Suggestions regarding your future care.

Often, the examination is when the dentist may suggest further tooth care, such as braces, night guards, or whitening. It's not required to follow their advice when it comes to the physical appearance of your teeth, but there are always options to consider going forward.





# 3

## X-Rays



X-rays are amazing machines! They show us the solid objects inside our bodies past our muscles and skin. They can also take pictures, which doctors and dentists can then examine to find issues, such as broken bones and cavities!

Dental X-ray machines come in all shapes and sizes, but the modern version looks like a radar gun-- such as the one you see tracking speed on the highway or scanning barcodes at the supermarket. It is held to the outside of your mouth, often accompanied by film packets placed inside the mouth to concentrate the X-ray's focus on certain areas.



# 4 Fillings

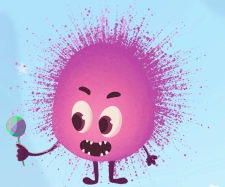
Cavities are holes that develop in your teeth when germs (AKA: sugarbugs) eat away at your enamel. Most of these can be avoided with good flossing and brushing; but occasionally, cavities happen. When they do, it's important to get them treated by a dentist!



If you have a cavity, a dentist will clean out the hole and fill it with tooth-colored material. This process requires your mouth to be made numb with medicine, which can feel tingly and strange. But don't worry! After the filling is complete, your tooth will be stronger than ever!



Eww! A sugarbug!





# 5

## Braces



Do you know what an “orthodontist” is? It’s the kind of dentist that specializes in moving your teeth around! Some people are born with straight, perfectly spaced teeth, but others aren’t so lucky. For these people, orthodontists are there to fix your smile with braces.

Braces typically come in two types: metal and clear. Metal braces are fastened to your teeth with glue and strung together with wires. Clear aligners (AKA: Invisalign) are custom-made plastic trays that can be removed for short periods of time. Both types are effective in correcting jaw and bite issues.



# 6 Extractions



Fun Fact: Most people in their late teens/early twenties will develop “wisdom teeth.” These are extra teeth we don’t need--and often they will push into the teeth you already have. If that happens, a dentist will recommend their removal.

It’s possible that at some point in your life, a tooth may need to be removed. Sometimes there’s no more room in your mouth for it; sometimes it’s too injured to fix. In any case, a dentist may decide to take one of your teeth out, and this process is called “extraction.” Pulling out a tooth may sound a bit nerve-wracking, but a skilled dentist will make the experience as comfortable as possible. You may feel a little pinch and some tingling in your mouth, lips, or tongue, but that’s normal. Close your eyes or listen to some music, and it’ll be over before you know it!





# *What can I do to make my visit to the dentist the best possible experience?*

## What to bring:

- Books or activities for the waiting room
- Stuffed animal to cuddle or pillow to squeeze
- Headphones to block out unpleasant noises
- Your own sunglasses, if they're prescription or a better fit than the office's pair
- Any relevant health records
- Dental insurance information
- Relaxation medication, if previously prescribed

## Other things

### to keep in mind:

1. Advocate for yourself! You're always encouraged to say something, raise your hand, or even take a break if you need it.
2. Take care of your teeth between visits! People who brush and floss regularly at home have easier times at the dentist.
3. It's okay to be nervous! Dentists aren't going to judge you if you forgot to floss once or twice. They're just happy you're here, taking care of your health.



# *Thank You!*

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out! We here at Light Dental Studios want you to feel comfortable visiting the dentist. That way, your teeth can stay happy and healthy!

Don't forget to keep brushing, flossing, and smiling!



## *Contact:*

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