

Going to a dental appointment is a frightening experience for many people. Even having a cleaning can elicit a fear response which seems irrational but is very real. Dental anxiety is a common fear. Approximately 6–15 percent of the population suffers from high dental fear and avoidance.

Dental phobia is a serious condition. It's characterized by highly intense fear or dread. People with dental phobia aren't merely anxious, but terrified or panic stricken. People with dental phobia have a higher risk of gum disease and premature tooth loss. If dental problems were found early, the cost and the extent of the discomfort would have been reduced considerably.

The first step in overcoming dental phobia is to find a dentist who is sensitive to your needs and who you are comfortable with. You must also take in consideration the various types of pain and anxiety control the office offers, consisting of local anesthesia, inhalation analgesia (laughing gas), oral sedation and intravenous sedation or a combination of these. Utilizing a

form of sedation is most helpful in overcoming dental phobia since it removes the inhibitions associated with the dental appointment. Oral sedation combines nitrous oxide gas with oral medications to cause a very relaxed state of mind which allows the patient to remove themselves from the actual treatment situation and in many instances fall into a sleep state during the appointment. Intravenous sedation is the injection of medication which allows the patient to slip into a level of unconsciousness which removes total awareness of the dental appointment with little or no memory of the treatment.

A new and unique device that has just become available for patients who have a fear of dentistry is the Dental Panic Button. It is a button that the patient holds in their hand during treatment and with a push of the Button, immediately shuts off the drill. No more raising the hand or other methods of getting the dentist's attention if it hurts. With the use of the Dental Button, the patient experiences some control over their dental treatment alleviating much of the fear during the dental appointment.

Ask your dentist if any of the mentioned treatments would be suitable for you in order to have a more comfortable dental experience.

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