

## Staying safe from diseases

You probably do certain things every day to avoid COVID-19. Dentists also take special steps to protect you and their staff.



- **Ahead of time:** The staff may ask questions about your health. If you do not feel well, ask to reschedule your visit.
- **At home:** The dentist can sometimes look at your mouth and answer questions by video. You may have some visits this way for safety.
- **In the waiting room:** Seats will be spaced 6 feet apart, and only a few people will be in the room. You may be asked to wear a face mask. You may be asked to wait in your car or outside. The staff may ask you if you have COVID-19 symptoms and take your temperature.
- **In the office:** The staff will wear face masks and other protective gear. The office will be cleaned carefully and often. People in the office will stay 6 feet away from each other and from you as much as possible.



### Ask Questions

Before you go home, make sure you know what happened during your visit and what to do next. You can ask questions any time during your visit. Make sure to ask questions if you are uncomfortable or unsure about anything.

### Dental Insurance

Insurance can help you pay for your family's dental care. If your income is low, you can get low- or no-cost dental insurance from [www.coveredca.com](http://www.coveredca.com). or **myMedi-Cal** (<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Pages/myMedi-Cal.aspx>).



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## Going to the Dentist

- How to get ready
- Who you will meet
- What happens during a visit
- Staying safe from diseases



## How to get ready

You can make your first visit to the dentist easier if you do some things ahead of time, like these:

### ? Things to Ask Before You Go

- Find out where the office is and decide how you will get there. Ask the office for directions.
- Find out about parking or public transportation.
- Ask if the office takes your dental insurance.
- Ask for language assistance if you need it.

### ✎ Things to Do Before You Go

- Fill out any forms that the office sends to you.
- Arrange for child care if you need to. You should not bring any extra people to your visit.
- Brush and floss your teeth.

### 📄 Things to Bring With You

- Your insurance card.
- Any forms you filled out.
- A list of all your medicines.
- A list of your questions.
- A face mask.

## Who you will meet

You will meet people in the dental office who have different jobs. Not all offices are the same, but many offices work like this:

- **The receptionist** greets you when you arrive. They help with your paperwork and tell other staff members that you have come in. You will likely talk to them when you leave as well.
- **The dental assistant** may seat you in the dentist's chair. The assistant also helps the dentist with your exam and treatment.
- **The dental hygienist** cleans your teeth and talks to you about how to keep your mouth healthy.
- **The dentist** talks to you and looks in your mouth to see if you need treatment. The dentist provides any treatments you need. An assistant or hygienist may help with treatments.



## What happens during a visit

People go to the dentist for both regular checkups and to fix problems. Here is what happens at a regular checkup.



Taking care of your teeth at home and having checkups helps you avoid dental problems.

- **Discussion:** Someone will go over the forms you filled out and ask you questions about your mouth and teeth.
- **Mouth exam:** The dentist looks in your mouth and checks the health of your teeth and gums. They will tell you what they see, as well as what you should do every day at home to keep your mouth healthy.
- **X-rays:** The dentist may need to take pictures that show the insides of your teeth and the parts underneath your gums.
- **Teeth cleaning:** The hygienist or the dentist will use special tools to remove plaque from your teeth. Plaque is a sticky film that grows in our mouths.
- **Treatments:** You may have fluoride varnish or a sealant put on your teeth to prevent cavities.