

Business News / What to expect when visiting the dentist after 10 years or more

What to expect when visiting the dentist after 10 years or more



BUSINESS NEWS | yesterday | DR. EDWARD HARSINI

The past year was unexpected and crazy for everyone and maybe this caused you to put off your dental health checkup. Maybe you haven't been to the dentist in a much longer period, let's say ten years or more. If you can't remember the last time you saw a dentist you need to set an appointment as soon as possible. Millions of people put off seeing a dentist for many years, and though this is not recommended many people do. It's not a good practice to get into, and it will cost the patient a lot more down the road because the prices of products and services go up each year. Also, simple cavities lead to more expensive procedures. If it has been a decade or more since you have visited the dentist, here are a few things to expect during your next appointment.

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Extended Cleaning

If you haven't been to the dentist in years, you will probably have some tarter and build-up on your teeth depending on your oral hygiene habits of course. This will cause your cleaning to take longer than normal and be more invasive and expensive. It will take more time for a dental hygienist to clean each tooth. You can cut down on your time in the dentist's chair by brushing at least twice a day for 2 minutes and regular flossing.

Dental X-Rays

Radiographs are an important tool for your dentist to diagnose any underlying oral health issues. Your dentist will take a series of X-rays to make sure there aren't any problems hidden under the surface. Your dentist will need new X-rays due to possible changes with your dental health or possible screening for tumors and oral cancer and other serious oral issues.

Gum Bleeding

When going back to the dentist after a decade or more expect there will be some bleeding. While the sight of blood is evidence of gingivitis that needs to be addressed, gums can also bleed when they are not used to the pressure of floss and of course that is a sign of gum disease. You can reduce the chances of your gums bleeding by regularly flossing at home. In some instances, bleeding gums can be a sign of a more serious issue. Therefore, it is important to visit your dentist regularly.

Comprehensive Oral Exam

After the dental hygienist has cleaned your teeth, the dentist will do a comprehensive oral exam. They may also look for symptoms of oral cancer. After not visiting the dentist for many years there is a high probability that you may have some cavities or some signs of early trauma and wear. If you are returning to the dentist due to pain, then you may require an extraction if it is a wisdom tooth or a sign of a nerve issue with a tooth requiring a root

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canal or some other issues that need to be addressed.

Steps to take after your dental visit

Once the dentist has examined your teeth and gums, they will discuss with you the next steps you should take. In many cases, the conversation will be limited to how to maintain good oral hygiene. If the dentist has found cavities or other problems, they will recommend you make a follow-up appointment to address these issues.

Before you leave the office, you should schedule a follow-up appointment in six months, even if you have no problems. By getting regular cleanings you can prevent the risk of oral health problems like tooth loss.

The average cost of a dental visit

Depending on where you live you can expect to pay from 125 to 350 dollars for a professional comprehensive exam, cleaning, and X-rays. This depends on the dentist and zip code. The cost will go up if you require other invasive procedures like a deep cleaning or administration of local antibiotics to a particular site around the tooth.

The average cost of a dental cleaning

A single dental cleaning can cost between 75 to 150 dollars depending on the dentist. Your costs can be greater if the cleaning involves scaling or another treatment to address gingivitis or another oral health issue.

How to deal with dental visit anxiety

It is common for people who haven't been to the dentist in many years to experience anxiety. Here are a few tips to help you deal with this anxiety.

- Share your fears with the hygienist and dentist
- Ask your dentist if you can use headphones to listen to music
- Avoid caffeine before your appointment
- Use hand signals to alert the dentist of any pain
- Choose a less busy time for the dentist office
- Keep your breathing regulated and stay relaxed during the visit

Going back to the dentist can be stressful but understanding what to expect can help you ease any anxiety you might have. Call local dentist offices and discuss your concerns with the dental staff before you go so you find the right dentist for you. Oral health is important for the overall health of your body so schedule an appointment today and get back to regular visits.

Author: Dr. Edward Harsini is the owner of *Smile Dental Clinics* in Phoenix, Ariz. He graduated from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Dental School in 1998. He is certified by UCLA Aesthetic Continuum, The 3M Imtec Mini Dental Implants, and GRU/AAID Maxi-Course Implant Dentistry.

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