

Facing Your Dental Phobia Head-On



Does just thinking about going to the dentist cause you to run for the hills? You're not alone. Between nine and 20 percent of Americans [avoid dental appointments](#) because they are afraid of the experience they think they'll have in the dentist's chair.

If you struggle with a dental phobia or even mild anxiety, here are some tips to help you alleviate your worries about seeing a dentist:

- If your anxiety is due to a bad experience from years ago, consider that modern dental offices are equipped to make visits more comfortable and less stressful than ever before. In fact, many people who were once frightened now describe their visits as surprisingly pleasant.
- Look for a dentist who is sensitive and works with fearful patients. Ask friends and family for recommendations, or call your [local dental society](#). Use United Concordia Dental's [Find a Dentist](#) search tool to confirm the dentist is in-network.
- Don't be embarrassed: Talk to the dentist and staff about your fears.
- Schedule your appointment early in the day so you have less time to get nervous.
- Ask a friend to accompany you.
- Start out with easy procedures, such as exams and cleanings.
- Discuss anesthesia and sedation options before scheduling complex procedures.

Know that once you have good dental experiences under your belt, your fears will continue to lessen with each appointment. And, just as an apple a day keeps the doctor away, [good home care](#) and regular checkups can make it less likely that you'll need complicated dental procedures down the road.