

How can Smile Solutions help manage your child's dental anxiety? - Smile Solutions

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Details:

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13 96 Smile Solutions 26 Jul 2021 How can Smile Solutions help manage your child's dental anxiety?
Going to the dentist can be quite stressful for children. Being asked to sit still — often tipped back in a
big chair — with a bright light in their eyes and someone poking around in their mouth can rattle even
the calmest of kids! Children who have suffered past unpleasant dental experiences or are aware that
they have a dental problem are especially likely to be anxious and fearful of the dentist. What can you
do? Whether your child is mildly nervous or seriously afraid, try these strategies to make visiting the
dentist a more positive experience. An excellent way to minimize anxiety for children is to start regular
dental visits before a problem like a cavity develops. The benefits of early and regular dental care are
two-fold: Your child gets into the routine of seeing the dentist while still young (and possibly less
nervous) and staying on top of any potential problems can reduce the chance of needing future
extensive (ouch!) dental treatment. Did you know that you can bring your child to Smile Solutions to get
acquainted before the day of their actual appointment? Coming to the dentist can be a bit of an
overload. By visiting first, your child can get acclimated and come back another day knowing what to
expect. You can even take your child along to a parent or older sibling's dental check-up. If you cannot
come in prior to the appointment, no worries, the Tooth Fairy at Smile Solutions can show you around
virtually. Forget your own dental fears. If you dread the dentist, your child can pick up on your feelings
and anxiety. Run interference if siblings or friends tell scary dentist stories. DO NOT use the words
'needles, injections and drills' and don't say, 'Don't worry. It will not hurt.' I know you mean to reassure
your child, but your child is going to focus on the word hurt. Check-ups are generally pain-free, so steer
clear of that concept entirely. Try setting up a role play of the dentist with your child's dolls and stuffed
toys. This activity is not only a fun way to spend time with your child but will also soothe any
unwarranted fears your child may have. Advise us if you would like plastic mouth mirrors, gloves and
masks as props for your role play. Let your child bring whatever comforts them (stuffed toy, blanket,
fidget spinner, etc.) to their check-up. What can we do? As a Specialist Paediatric Dentist at Smile
Solutions, I manage anxious children all day, at every appointment, so I have a good understanding of
how my little patients feel and how best to ease their fears and make them feel comfortable. At Smile
Solutions we provide an empathetic approach and aim at building trusting relationships with each child.

A part of that involves telling the child what we are going to do, showing them, and then doing it. If at any point during the appointment your child begins to panic or feel anxious, or if they simply want a break to spit out and rinse, we give them the opportunity to stop until they feel comfortable again. We try to minimise the number of sensory inputs, so they do not feel overloaded or overwhelmed. With routine recall appointments, each visit becomes more predictable, and your child will become more comfortable. Over time, they become more confident and then allow more to be completed. As part of child-friendly practice we have TV screens playing child-friendly shows and videos that children can watch from the dental chair during the appointment. This can help take the focus off dental treatment. At the end of the appointment, we reinforce positive behaviour by letting children dig through the prize box.

Happy gas Some children are compliant but anxious and require additional help getting through their dental treatment more comfortably. Nitrous oxide, better known as laughing or happy gas, may be appropriate in such cases. Happy gas is a mild sedative and analgesic (pain relief) gas that is delivered through a nose piece. Happy gas has been safely used in paediatric dentistry over the years to help children cope with procedures they may otherwise struggle with. Prior to use your child's medical history will be reviewed and fasting instructions will be given. This is because sometimes children can feel nausea after receiving happy gas. When receiving happy gas, children usually feel happy, floaty, lightheaded, tingles in their fingers. These effects are felt within minutes of starting the gas and stop within minutes of stopping the gas.

General Anaesthesia Some children may have complex treatment needs and may be unable to tolerate dental treatment while awake. This is especially common in young children and children with special needs. In such cases it is safer, and we can carry out better quality care when the child is asleep. General anaesthesia is performed by highly trained and experienced specialist paediatric anaesthetists at private hospitals in Melbourne and will ensure the procedure goes as smoothly and safely as possible. You can contact the team on 13 13 96 if you would like to discuss the option of dental treatment under happy gas or general anaesthesia.

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