

What to Expect During Your First Patient Visit

The first exam appointment is usually made via a phone call from the patient, although contact can often be made by e-mail, too. Any initial queries that you have can be answered and you can let the dentist know of any problems you have experienced in the past.

X-rays

X-rays are an important part of your dental examination. They help diagnose any problems under the surface or around the foundations of the teeth.

X-rays are usually taken by biting on a small tab which steadies the x-ray film in your mouth while the dentist positions the x-ray beam to take the picture. These are called bitewing x-rays.

Some dentists have an x-ray machine that can take a picture of all your teeth at once (panoramic or panoral x-rays). This involves sitting or standing still while the machine slowly rotates.

Initial Check

After meeting your dentist, he or she will do a visual check using a small mirror or by shining a light in your mouth. The dentist will check your gums as well as your teeth. This is to check for any gum disease and any other potential problems that you should know about which are important for your health.

The dentist may also ask you to wear glasses when you lie back in the dental chair, especially if you're having your teeth cleaned as part of the check-up. These are to protect your eyes in case there is any water splashing about.

A dental probe is used to gently feel the bumps and valleys on the surface of the tooth. If the dentist notices any tackiness on the surface of the tooth, it might be a soft area which would indicate decay is present.

Dental Charting

During your check-up, the dentist will count your teeth and make a note of any fillings that are present, any missing teeth, and any areas he or she would like to keep an eye on.



During a dental examination, your dentist will check not only your teeth, but also the health of your entire mouth.