

# POWER OF KNOWING

An educational resource for patients and families.

## HELPING YOUR CHILD COPE WITH DENTAL CARE

### The unknown is often scarier than the known

Sometimes, children and their parents have worries about visiting the dentist. Having information and preparing for the visit can help address worries and reduce stress.

### How to help your child prepare for a visit with a dentist:

#### Infants/Toddlers:

- Read books or watch a short video about going to the dentist.
- Play dentist with a lamp or book light, leaning back position. Peek-a-Boo with mask. Use gloves and take turns to count each other's teeth.
- Sing songs to encourage opening mouth: "Open Shut, Open Shut, Open 1-2-3 then Shut. Open Shut, Open Shut, Open 1-2-3-4-5 then Shut".
- Create a paper bag puppet to use with open mouth songs and play.
- Use these games frequently before a future visit.
- Choose a comfort item, a character to practice on first, or a favorite toy to bring.

#### School Age/Teens:

- Be honest, acknowledge fears, and focus on ways to make the visit easier.
- Practice Progressive Muscle Relaxation and breathing (through the nose) activities at home. PMR involves tightening and relaxing different muscles.
- Use soft language. "Medicines that take the pain away" instead of "shot" or "injection", "small brush to clean the black spot" instead of "drill".
- Help children understand the sound, taste, smell, and feeling of something by relating it to something familiar and not scary.

### Supporting your child during visits:

- Choose a positive focus: parent reading a book, using music or video with a headset, thinking about a favorite place, and using a stress ball.
- Use a comfort position: hold hands, parent laying in chair with child laying back.
- Give praise: "great job...holding still, opening your mouth, taking deep breaths".
- Use positive statements "we can get through hard things", "I am here to help you with your job of holding still".

### Child Life Services

A child life specialist is available to provide support and help your child explore the dental equipment. Please email: [khchildlife@fakeeh.care](mailto:khchildlife@fakeeh.care) to schedule a visit.



### Suggested Resources

#### Song on Brushing

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCio\\_xVlgQ0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCio_xVlgQ0)

#### Helpful Tips

[Child Life Mommy: 7 tips to help your child at the dentist](#)

[American Dental Association: Healthy Smiles From the Start](#)



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