

Expert Contributor



CANYON VIEW DENTISTRY

A Happy Visit TO THE DENTIST

By Dr. Cara McCallum



Many parents wonder, "At what age should my child start seeing a dentist? I mean, they don't even have a full set of baby teeth until they're around three years old, and their adult teeth won't come in until age six, so waiting until then isn't a big deal, right?"

Surprisingly enough, by age three there can already be serious dental issues that cause lasting effects! In general, you should schedule a "happy visit" for your child when they start getting their first teeth or around age one. It's important that young children learn to love the dental office. Your dental team can eliminate fear and apprehension by setting the stage for future dental appointments with a stress-free, fun start. Done right, your kids will be set up for a life of anxiety-free dentistry!

At that first appointment, most of the time is spent on education. Your dentist may complete a "knee to knee" or a lap exam; the dental professional is then knee-to-knee with the parent and has full access to the child's head and neck. They will fully examine the soft tissues, eruption patterns, and teeth while discussing what they are seeing

and what they expect to see. The dentist will alert the parent to any potential issues noted, and possible treatment needs. If the visit is going well, they may move on to a toothbrush cleaning. If the child starts to fuss or refuses to open their mouth, the visit will come to an end, and the child will not be forced to continue.

Making a child's first dental appointment, the "happy visit," stress-free and a fun experience, can set a child up for a lifetime of dental health without fear of the dental office. It is also an important time to educate parents on oral health, oral care at home, and healthy nutrition choices.



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