

# Dental Anxiety Guide



Psychologist, Dr Ash King, shares her tips on how to stay calm at the Dentist

“I’ll be honest, I used to be terrified of going to the dentist”  
Dr Ash King

## It’s Normal to Be Nervous

Going to the dentist can bring up some uneasy feelings. If you feel nervous, tense, or even a little panicky about going, you’re not alone. Lots of people feel the same. That’s why, National Dental Care team understand, and are there to support you with empathy, patience, and a gentle approach every step of the way.

## What Will Happen at Your Appointment

Whether it’s been a couple of months or a couple of years between appointments, sometimes it helps to know what to expect.

### Here’s a quick breakdown of a standard appointment



#### A warm welcome

From the moment you arrive, you’ll be greeted with a smile and welcomed into a calm, professional space.



#### Time to talk

Your dentist will sit down with you to chat through any worries, explain what will be happening, and check in about your preferences.



#### A gentle approach

Each step will be explained clearly, and there’s room to pause along the way, so you don’t feel rushed or overwhelmed.



#### Comfort-focused care

The clinic uses modern tools and techniques that help make your visit smoother and more comfortable.



#### You call the shots

If something doesn’t feel right or you’re not ready to continue, you can request to stop or reschedule at any point.

## Breathe Through It: A Simple Calming Technique

If you’re noticing strong feelings or racing thoughts showing up when leading up to your appointment, here’s an easy, grounding breath technique you can try. It helps you get out of your head and into your body.



Sit comfortably, close your eyes if that feels okay



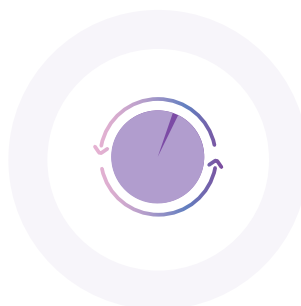
Inhale slowly through your nose for a count of 4



Hold your breath for a count of 4



Exhale gently through your mouth for a count of 6



Repeat for 1–2 minutes, focusing on the rhythm of your breath

You can do this in the car, the waiting room, or even once you’re in the chair. It’s a great way to remind your body and brain: I’m safe. I’m brave. I’m in control.

## Extra Tips to Calm Pre-Appointment Nerves



#### Talk to someone you trust

A quick check-in with a supportive friend can help ease the buildup



#### Bring a comfort item

Headphones, a stress ball, or even your favourite hoodie can help



#### Distract yourself

Listen to a podcast or calming music while you wait



#### Give yourself time

Arriving a little early helps avoid that rushed, flustered feeling



#### Notice tension

If your body is tense, notice it and gently invite your muscles to relax a little with a deep exhale or even shaking it out



#### Reframe the story

This isn’t just “a dentist appointment,” it’s a courageous step toward taking care of yourself

## Why Oral Health is Worth It



Looking after your teeth and gums is about more than just avoiding cavities. It’s an act of self-care that supports your whole body and mind. Whether it’s been six months or six years since your last visit, we’re here to help you take that first step – and we’ll be with you every step after that.

Brought to you by

