



## During the Dental Appointment

*BQIS Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual's health and safety and to improving their quality of life. This is the third of four Fact Sheets regarding dental appointments.*

### Intended Outcomes

Reader will understand what to expect during an appointment to a dental office.

### Definitions

**Dental Health Provider:** Any dentist, dental hygienist, or clinician that requires an appointment and evaluation to provide services and recommendations to an individual.

### Facts

- Not all dental offices are experienced in managing individuals with intellectual disabilities.
- Persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities may need special support during dental appointments.

### Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. Checking in and waiting area:
  - Check in with the receptionist upon arrival to office; introduce yourself and the individual you are accompanying.
  - State reason you are there; encourage the person to participate as able.
  - Discuss accommodations needed in waiting room such as a more private space if such arrangement were not made ahead of time.
  - Provide information to the receptionist as requested such as insurance information, photo ID.
  - Maintain a positive, supportive environment while waiting. Engage the person in preferred activity as needed.
  - If you need to leave waiting area with the individual for any reason, alert the receptionist and establish a method for him/her to contact you while you are out of the waiting area. Do not leave the individual alone in the waiting room.



### 2. In the examination room:

- Provide the dental professional with any health care visit/consultation type form, other health related information, and review the reason for the appointment.
- Review with the dental professional any concerns or questions that you were asked to relay from other team members.
- Ask that the dental professional communicates directly with the individual. Explain the best way to communicate and interact with the individual that will increase cooperation.
- Stay with the individual to provide support and assist with communication.
- Refer the dental professional to a contact person in the provider agency, a guardian, or to written information if you do not know the answer to the health care provider's question.
- Talk with the health care provider about challenges that may occur during the exam or procedure.
- Help with explaining things and providing support to the individual during the exam or procedure. This may include providing diversions or requesting shorter, simpler events or steps with breaks in between.
- Help assist with transfer and positioning of the individual.
- If the exam/procedure is not completed, make sure the reason for not completing exam/procedure is documented on health care visit/consultation form, along with written recommendations for addressing future steps.
- DO NOT give verbal or written consent for invasive procedures—refer the dental professional to the guardian or health care representative if individual cannot give own consent.
- Encourage the use of the least invasive procedures possible.
- Discuss with the dental professional whether there are any new diagnoses, orders, or recommendations.
- Discuss with the provider the need for him/her to write new orders for medications, instructions for dental hygiene/oral care, or needed monitoring and any other recommendations or orders necessary for the management of the health issue on the provided health care visit/consultation form.



- Discuss the reason for any new medications and whether there are any special instructions related to the use of the medication including times to administer, methods of administration, and anticipated side effects.
  - Discuss when any new medications should begin.
  - Make sure that any medications that are to be discontinued have specific orders for the discontinuation.
  - Discuss whether any monitoring/observation is necessary and what would prompt a call or follow-up appointment with the dentist.
  - Discuss whether any follow-up procedures or appointments are necessary.
  - Ask how the results of any tests will be obtained and/or communicated.
  - Make sure all instructions, recommendations, and orders are written on the health care visit/consultation.
  - Read orders and recommendations back to the health care provider to ensure they are legible and understood.
3. Checking out:
- Schedule any follow-up dental appointments, tests, or procedures as ordered prior to leaving the office.
  - Make arrangements for payment or reimbursement as needed.



### Learning Assessment

The following questions can be used to verify a person's competency regarding the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. It is acceptable to do all of the following during an appointment except:
  - A. Assist the individual with communication
  - B. Sign consent for a procedure
  - C. Ask questions regarding a new medication
  - D. Assist with transferring the individual to the dental chair
2. Before leaving the appointment it is important that you:
  - A. Schedule the follow-up appointment
  - B. Obtain written instructions and recommendations
  - C. Clarify any new instructions that you do not understand
  - D. All of the above

### References

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### Related Resources

*Dental Appointment Series Fact Sheets: Initial Contact, Preparing for the Dental Appointment, and After the Dental Appointment*

*Managing Appointment Series Fact Sheets: Initial Contact, Preparing for the Health Care Appointment, During the Appointment and After the Appointment*

*Managing Appointment Series Checklists: Initial Contact, Preparing for the Health Care Appointment, During the Appointment, and After the Appointment*

These resources can be located on the BQIS Fact Sheet & Reminders webpage at:  
<http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/3948.htm>.

### Learning Assessment Answers

1. B
2. D