

## HEALTH & SAFETY: DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

### “Initial Contact”

*BQIS/Outreach 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 first of four Fact Sheets regarding Dental Appointments.*

#### Objectives

Reader will understand what information is necessary to communicate to a dental health provider when setting up the initial appointment.

Reader will understand that the dental health provider needs specific information in order to be able to make an informed decision whether he/she can provide the supports necessary.

Reader will understand the need to confirm with the dental health provider their ability to serve the person prior to scheduling the appointment.

#### 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 health providers accept new patients with Medicaid and/or other health insurance.
- Not all dental health providers’ offices are accessible for all types of mobility equipment.
- Not all dental health providers and staff are experienced with individuals with intellectual disabilities.

#### Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. Have the following items available before calling a dental provider:

- Insurance information
- Guardian name and contact information
- Medical/surgical history
- Dental history including information from recent appointments and x-rays and whether or not the individual requires prophylactic antibiotics prior to dental appointments

- Reason individual is seeking an appointment
  - Name and phone number of the pharmacy the individual uses
2. During the Call:
- Introductions:
    - Introduce yourself, your relationship to the person, and if needed, describe the type of residential setting (Group home, Waiver...).
    - Relay person-specific information including behavioral issues, anxieties, phobia, best time for appointments, etc.
    - Explain that the person is in need of an appointment and describe the reason for the appointment; if person is in pain or has a dental emergency, share this information.
    - Be prepared to provide insurance information and discuss whether the practitioner accepts that insurance.
  - Relay Person-Specific Needs:
    - Discuss accessibility needs or accommodation that may be needed such as parking an oversized van, use of a gurney or wheelchair, a need for limited waiting or an early morning appointment.
    - If necessary discuss the need for prophylactic antibiotics with the dental office and request that they provide a prescription for or call in to the pharmacy the necessary antibiotics.
  - Ask Questions:
    - Ask if dental office can provide verbal and written recommendations and instructions/copy of office note at each appointment, and provide input to the person's team as needed.
    - Ask what type of information is to be brought to the appointment including need for consent for treatment.
    - Ask whether any necessary forms/information can be completed and sent or hand delivered prior to scheduled appointment. This may minimize time at the office prior to the appointment.

## Learning Assessment

Questions that can be used to verify a person's competency in the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. True or False: All dental providers are familiar with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) and how to best manage dental issues of a person with I/DD.
2. All of the following information is useful to have available when making the initial appointment EXCEPT:
  - A. Driver's license number
  - B. Insurance information
  - C. Guardianship information
  - D. Dental history

## References

Prater, Christopher D. MD, Medical Care of Adults with Mental Retardation. American Family Physician Volume 73, Number 12. June 2006

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Stoppler, Mellissa MD, Getting the Most of Your Doctor's Appointment. [www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=47165](http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=47165)

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## Related Resources

Dental Appointment Series Fact Sheets: "Preparing for the Dental Appointment", "During the Dental Appointment", and "After the Dental Appointment"

Managing Appointment Series Fact Sheets: "Initial Contact", "Preparing for the Healthcare Appointment", "During the Appointment" and "After the Appointment"

Managing Appointment Series Checklists: "Initial Contact", "Preparing for the Healthcare Appointment", "During the Appointment", and "After the Appointment"

## Learning Assessment Answers

1. False
2. A

## Outreach Services

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As a service for persons supporting individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, BQIS/ Outreach developed the Outreach Fact Sheet Library. The information provided is designed to enhance the understanding of the topic and does not replace other professional or medical instructions or individually developed plans. For more fact sheets and information, please visit [DDRSOutreach.IN.gov](http://DDRSOutreach.IN.gov).



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