

HEALTH & SAFETY: DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

“Preparing for the Dental Appointment”

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 second of four Fact Sheets regarding Dental Appointments.

Objectives

Reader will understand how to prepare for a dental appointment and what information is essential to bring to appointment.

Reader will understand what needs to be considered in preparing an individual for an 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

- A dental healthcare provider may cancel an appointment if the person arrives late per their practice.
- A dental healthcare provider may discharge an individual from services if there is a pattern of missed appointments.
- To maximize effectiveness of a dental appointment, it is essential that the person accompanying the individual to the appointment:
 - Knows the person
 - Understands the purpose of the appointment
 - Communicates on behalf of the person as needed
 - Understands what to bring to the appointment

Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. Ensure Pre-appointment medication, if any, is available in the home the day prior to the appointment.
2. Take pertinent information to the appointment:
 - Name and contact information of Guardian/Healthcare Representative
 - Insurance cards and photo identification
 - List of current medications and medication history (if available) including medicine that was recently changed, reason for the change and any problems with medications in the past.
 - Medical/surgical/ dental history; current dental x-rays and other pertinent information related to the appointment
 - Information /questions provided by the individual's support team including events leading up to current problem/issue
 - Completed "Healthcare visit/consultation form" as used by the agency with reason for appointment written on it. Ensure that the person's name is on this form.
 - Contact information, directions and parking information for the dental office
 - List of other current healthcare providers for the person with their contact information
 - Name and phone and fax number of a contact person from the provider agency if applicable
 - Name, location, and phone and fax number of preferred pharmacy
3. Prepare the Individual:
 - Obtain orders regarding eating or holding medication as needed.
 - Administer any necessary routine and PRN medication as ordered.
 - Ensure the individual has time to have personal hygiene needs met and time to eat (if allowed) prior to the appointment. Ensure teeth are brushed.
 - Ensure the individual is clean and dressed appropriately in clothing that can be easily removed if needed.
 - Prepare snacks and drinks as needed especially if a long distance to the appointment. If snacks are eaten prior to appointment ensure that teeth are brushed.
 - Prepare necessary supplies for hygiene needs such as wipes, adult under garments, a change of clothing, toothbrush, and toothpaste.
 - Prepare activities, items to keep occupied in the event you have to wait.
 - Explain what will happen in language appropriate for the individual's level of understanding and anxiety with input from the support team.
 - Provide desensitization as needed and as outlined in behavior support plan.
 - Allow appropriate travel time to prevent rushing the individual. If running late for any reason, notify the dental office and let them know of the situation and anticipated arrival time and verify whether the healthcare provider can still see the individual.
 - Arrive 10-15 minutes early particularly if first appointment unless otherwise directed by provider's office.

4. Staff should notify their supervisor if they have any question regarding an upcoming 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: A dental office will always give a person 3 chances to make the scheduled appointments.
2. It is important to bring the following to an appointment:
 - A. Insurance information
 - B. List of current medications
 - C. Health history information
 - D. All of the above
3. If you are unsure of the reason for an appointment:
 - A. Go ahead and the dental office will figure it out
 - B. Call someone to get the needed information
 - C. Cancel the appointment immediately

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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Related Resources

Dental Appointment Series Fact Sheets: "Initial Contact", "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. D
3. B

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.



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