

First Trip to the Dentist

Pre-reading

Questions: At what age should a child make his/her first trip to the dentist?
What might happen at a child's first dentist visit?

Definitions: Initial – the first or very beginning

Oral – relating to or belonging to the mouth

Anxiety – a feeling of worry or fear

Dental hygienist – someone trained in the practice/principals of oral cleanliness

Imperative – important or essential



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Reading

18 Many parents do not realize that they should take their children for a first dental visit at a
33 very young age. According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, a child's initial visit
51 to the dentist should be around the age of twelve months. Although this seems young, it is never
58 too early to start good oral health.

58 When selecting a dentist for children, parents will want to choose one that has experience
73 with kids. Parents will often choose their own dentist as their child's dentist. This is acceptable,
89 but parents should make sure that their dentist has experience working with children as well as
105 adults. Sometimes it is helpful for parents to take their child with them on a routine dentist visit, so
124 the child can see what it is like. This can help decrease any anxiety that the child may have. There
144 are also many pediatric dentists that specialize in treating only children. This is a good option
160 because often their offices are designed just for kids.

169 The first trip to the dentist for a child will likely be exploratory in nature. The hygienist will
187 allow the child to ride in the fancy dentist chair, look at the different dental tools, and answer any
206 questions. The primary purpose of the first visit is to get the child comfortable and prepared for his
224 or her next visit. During the first visit, the dentist will typically do an exam to determine if the
243 child is at risk for any dental problems and will often count aloud the child's number of teeth to
262 keep the visit fun. Depending on the child's age, and if there are any concerns, the dentist will
280 make a recommendation as to when to return. Visiting the dentist every six months is usually what
297 is expected.

299 At the second visit to the dentist, or if the child is older, he or she will most likely have his or
321 her teeth cleaned. The cleaning is completed by the dental hygienist. The hygienist will also floss
337 the teeth after the cleaning. Another part of the visit will include a fluoride treatment. For young
354 children, the fluoride is usually applied by brushing it onto the teeth with a toothbrush. The dentist
371 examines the child's teeth after they are cleaned. Frequently, the dentist will have x-rays of the
387 mouth taken in order to check for cavities and to ensure that all permanent teeth are in place. If a
405 cavity is detected, the child will need to make a return visit in order to have it filled.

425 The concluding and best part of a dentist visit is the prize at the end. The **majority** of
443 dentists have a treasure box or stickers. Youngsters can choose their prize. Dentists also supply
458 toothbrushes, and sometimes even toothpaste and floss for each patient. It is imperative for a
473 dentist visit to be a pleasant experience for children.
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Understanding

1. Do you think 12 months is too young for a child to go to the dentist? Why or why not? _____

2. What is the main purpose for a child's first dental visit? _____

3. How often should children typically visit the dentist? _____

4. What type of dentist is best for a first dental visit? Why? _____

5. What are three things that happen at a child's second trip to the dentist? _____

6. Why are dental x-rays done for young children? _____

7. In the last paragraph, what does the word **majority** mean? _____

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Write about your childhood memories of visiting the dentist. Describe your positive or negative experiences.
