

Is there such a thing as pain-free dentistry?



Matthew Houlton from the Manor House Dental Practice, a long established York practice, is here to answer some common questions about how this can be done.

I've previously had bad experiences of dental treatment and I'm nervous about seeing a dentist.

Building trust and rapport with your dentist and hygienist is important; being able to express your concerns can help alleviate many of your anxieties. True dental phobics may benefit from counselling or hypnotherapy. Often, though, just feeling that your concerns are being understood can help. A listening ear, a friendly face and a calming environment can help to build a relationship of trust and friendship between the dental team and the patient which in turn will develop their confidence about dental visits.

I've always been nervous about the anaesthetic. Is there an alternative?

Even the thought of having an injection or the mere sight of a dental syringe can trigger anxiety in some patients. Fortunately there are some alternative approaches. Sedation is one method but can leave you feeling drowsy, which is not popular with everyone. Another alternative is a clever device called The Wand™. It is essentially a computer-controlled device which controls the delivery of the anaesthetic via a small pen like device that does not look or feel like an injection. This means that the injection is guaranteed to be slow and steady and therefore virtually pain-free.

Most people who have had a bad experience with injections think that needles sting because the skin is pierced, but this is usually not the case. Usually the sting is caused by the anaesthetic being pushed in too quickly.

I hate the sound of the drill. Can it be avoided?

For certain procedures there is an alternative to the drill. Air Abrasion is a technique which prepares the tooth using small particles fired from a thin pen-like hand-piece under air pressure. It can often mean there is no need for an anaesthetic. Distraction is another method to help overcome the anxiety of the sound of the drill. This can be achieved by losing yourself using music or better still watching a film via DVD glasses.

Recently when I brush my teeth I've noticed my gums bleed. Do I need to see a hygienist? Will it hurt?

Bleeding gums can be a sign of gum disease. It can often be resolved through a combination of visits to an oral hygienist and improved home care. A hygienist removes the calculus (tartar) that builds up and irritates the gums causing inflammation and gum disease, which if unchecked can lead to tooth loss. Regular visits can keep it under control and ensure you keep your teeth for life.

Some people are more prone than others to gum disease. Having appointments tailor made to suit your needs can ensure that you get the right treatment whilst allowing your utmost comfort.

For people who find their gums get sore whilst having their teeth scaled there is the option of using Oraquix gel. This is placed into the gum crevice to numb the gums without the need for an injection.

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