

Talk Time Topic: Going to the Dentist

Let's get started...

Think about the first time that you went to a dentist. Were you scared? Was it a good experience? How old were you? Tell your group about what happened on your first visit to the dentist.

Background:

People used to be afraid to go to the dentist. That was before dentists had good painkillers to stop you from feeling pain. Now it is easy - and almost always painless. If you think you have a problem with a tooth, you should make an appointment with a dentist. Dental work can be expensive, so try to visit a dentist when the problem is small. It is best if you know someone who can recommend a dentist. You should take your insurance information and your complete medical history with you. This includes the names of any medications or prescriptions that you are taking.



In pairs for 5 minutes, ask and answer these questions:

Do you have a dentist now? If you do not, ask for a recommendation now from your partner. You can ask, "Can you recommend a good dentist"?

What was your best experience at the dentist? What happened?

What was your worst experience? What happened?

Share your partner's answers with the group.

Discussion Questions:

Have you had a toothache before? What did you do? Did you already have a dentist?

Do you think going to the dentist is painful or painless? Why?

What information will the receptionist ask you for? Think about all the possible things she could say.

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The dentist will ask you questions about your symptoms. What kinds of information do you need to tell him/her?

Have you ever had trouble explaining your problems in English? Did you ask for an interpreter? If so, what happened?

Have you ever been late to a doctor or dentist appointment? What happened?

What happens in your native country if you are late to a medical or dental appointment?

The dental assistant or nurse will clean your teeth, take x-rays, and assist the dentist. Is this the same in your native country? Is it different?

What advice would you give someone from your country about visiting a dentist in the U.S.?

What advice would you give someone in the U.S. about visiting a dentist in your country?

Why do you think the medical history form is important? What can you do to make filling out the form easier in the future?

Have you heard the saying “pearly whites”? What does it mean?

There are many different types of toothpaste. Can you name some of them? What kind of toothpaste does your family use?

Gum disease is a serious problem in the U.S. What can you do to prevent it?

What can you do to prevent cavities?

Do you still have your wisdom teeth? If not, when and where did you have them taken out?

What is the biggest difference in dental care between the U.S. and your native country?

How often do you go to the dentist? Do you like going to the dentist?

New words and Idioms:

Toothache, symptoms, dental care, dental work, dentist, dental assistant, nurse, translate, interpreter, cavity, chipped tooth, wisdom teeth, to remove a tooth, “pearly whites”, flossing, dental floss, gums, gum disease, toothpaste, dental chair, x-rays, painkiller, nerve, painful, painless, receptionist, appointment, insurance, medical history, forms, medications, prescriptions, liquids, “to fight tooth and nail”, etc.