

## **Dental Anxiety Is Real!**

Many times, the most painful part of a procedure is the anxiety a patient endures before even climbing into the chair.

If you (or someone you care about) have an appointment that's beginning to darken your thoughts, try this: First focus on the specifics of your dental fear. Is it the procedure in general, or a particular piece of equipment, or a vague sense of invasion of the privacy of your mouth? Once you've got it pinned down, talk with your dentist about it. If it's general dental anxiety, your dentist can help you feel better. If it's concern over a specific instrument or technique, sometimes your dentist can change the way he does things.

You can help the "pre-op jitters" by avoiding stimulants (coffee, cocoa, sugar) six hours before your visit. And concentrate on breathing naturally; denying yourself oxygen increases anxiety.

Finally, there's a matter of trust. When your dentist describes a procedure, ask him to be honest. Ask him to tell you if it will be painful or stressful, if he tells you it won't be, believe him. And spare yourself the unnecessary burden of dental phobia.