

DENTALPHOBIA--THE SCARRED CHILDHOOD

Might sound like a great horror movie, but it isn't. It is unfortunately a story out of many people's past. This last week I saw several people who cringed as they flashed back to their childhood dental experiences. Some can find humor in tales of childhood torture, but most have a hard time walking through the front door. Childhood dental fears are common, but (thanks to preventive dentistry and advances in children's dental care) they will one day be history. That doesn't help you now.

How do you get over your fear now? The most important step is too make sure your dentist understands your fears and where they originate. Some patients need to work up to longer appointments or more involved work. Some need nitrous oxide. Some need lots of drugs. If your dentist understands your situation they can work around your biggest fears until you become comfortable in the chair. Some patients need a few appointments, some patients need a few years, some patients need a few dentists.

If the dentist you have been seeing is not patient enough to work through your fear or apprehension, you will have to find one that will. There are many out there. You need to be perfectly honest with your dentist about what sets off those childhood memories. Soon you will realize that is not how we do dentistry today. Most dentists will do whatever it takes to conquer your fears--those patients usually become the most loyal patients in your practice.