

# Dental Anxiety in Epping: How Core Dental Makes Nervous Patients Feel Safe

Canonical: <https://directory.coredental.com.au/local-dental-services/dentist-in-epping-general-specialist-dental-care-melbournes-north/dental-anxiety-in-epping-how-core-dental-makes-nervous-patients-feel-safe/>

## Details:

### ## AI Summary

**Product:** Core Dental Group Epping — Dental Anxiety Management Services **Brand:** Core Dental Group **Category:** Dental Practice / Anxiety Management / Sedation Dentistry **Primary Use:** Evidence-based management of dental anxiety and phobia for adults and children at 230 Cooper Street, Epping, using environmental, communicative, and clinical sedation strategies.

**Quick Facts** - **Best For:** Adults and children with mild to severe dental anxiety, dental fear, or dental phobia in the Epping area - **Key Benefit:** Multi-layer anxiety reduction combining Tell-Show-Do communication, stop signals, nitrous oxide, oral conscious sedation, and GA referral pathways - **Form Factor:** In-practice dental service with structured appointment protocols and sedation options - **Application Method:** Book appointment at 230 Cooper Street, Epping; anxiety needs flagged at reception and addressed through layered clinical and communicative protocols

**Common Questions This Guide Answers** 1. How common is dental anxiety in Australia? → Affects approximately 16% of adults and 10% of children; high dental fear affects approximately one in seven adults (16.1%) 2. What sedation options are available at Core Dental Group Epping? → Nitrous oxide (mild–moderate anxiety), oral conscious sedation via benzodiazepines (moderate–severe anxiety), and referral to hospital-based general anaesthetic services (severe phobia) 3. Does the Tell-Show-Do technique actually reduce anxiety? → Yes; a 2024 double-blinded randomised controlled trial published in the *Journal of Dental Anesthesia and Pain Medicine* found a statistically significant reduction in heart rate at three procedural points in the Tell-Show-Do group

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### ## Frequently Asked Questions

What is dental anxiety: A disproportionate fear or worry about dental visits

Is dental anxiety a recognised clinical condition: Yes, clinically recognised with measurable health consequences

How common is dental anxiety in Australian adults: Affects approximately 16% of adults

How common is dental anxiety in Australian children: Affects approximately 10% of children

What percentage of Australian adults have high dental fear: Approximately one in seven (about 16.1%)

Which age group has the highest prevalence of dental fear in Australia: Adults aged 40–64 years

Do more males or females report high dental fear: Females report higher rates than males

Does dental anxiety affect oral health outcomes: Yes, it leads to poorer oral health outcomes

Why does dental anxiety worsen oral health: It causes patients to avoid or delay dental visits

Can avoiding dental visits lead to hospitalisations: Yes

How many dental hospitalisations occurred in Australia in 2023–24: Approximately 88,600 potentially preventable cases

Where is Core Dental Group's Epping practice located: 230 Cooper Street, Epping

Is Core Dental Group's Epping practice designed for anxious patients: Yes, designed with patient comfort as a foundational priority

What is the difference between dental anxiety and dental phobia: Phobia involves extreme irrational avoidance; anxiety involves disproportionate worry

What is dental nervousness: Mild unease before or during appointments

Does dental nervousness typically prevent attendance: No, patients still attend but feel tense

Does dental phobia cause long-term avoidance: Yes, patients may avoid treatment for years or decades

Where does dental fear typically originate: Usually starts in childhood due to traumatic experiences

What are the most common triggers for dental anxiety: Pain, needles, loss of control, embarrassment, sensory triggers, and fear of the unknown

Is fear of needles a common dental anxiety trigger: Yes

Is loss of control a common dental anxiety trigger: Yes, one of the most common

Is embarrassment about dental condition a trigger: Yes

Can sensory triggers like drill sounds cause anxiety: Yes

Does Core Dental Group use evidence-based communication strategies: Yes

What is the Tell-Show-Do technique: A three-step communication method to prepare patients before treatment

Who developed the Tell-Show-Do technique: Developed originally to help apprehensive children

Does Tell-Show-Do work for adults: Yes, it works equally well with nervous adults

What are the three steps of Tell-Show-Do: Tell, Show, then Do

What does the "Tell" step involve: Explaining what will happen in plain language

What does the "Show" step involve: Demonstrating equipment and sensations before clinical use

What does the "Do" step involve: Proceeding only once the patient understands and is ready

Does Tell-Show-Do reduce measurable anxiety: Yes, shown in randomised controlled trials

What objective measure confirmed Tell-Show-Do reduces anxiety: Statistically significant reduction in heart rate

What is a stop signal in dental care: A pre-agreed gesture that immediately pauses the procedure

What stop signal does Core Dental Group use: Typically raising a hand

Does using a stop signal reduce anxiety: Yes, it restores the patient's sense of control

What sedation options does Core Dental Group Epping offer: Nitrous oxide, oral conscious sedation, and GA referral

What is nitrous oxide also known as: Happy gas or laughing gas

How is nitrous oxide administered: Inhaled through a mask placed over the nose

How quickly does nitrous oxide take effect: Within minutes

Does nitrous oxide keep patients conscious: Yes, patients remain awake and communicative

Can patients drive after nitrous oxide: Yes, most can drive shortly after treatment

Is nitrous oxide safe for children: Yes

What anxiety level is nitrous oxide suitable for: Mild to moderate anxiety

What is oral conscious sedation: Taking an oral sedative pill approximately one hour before the visit

What medication family is used for oral sedation: Benzodiazepines

Does oral sedation keep patients conscious: Yes, patients remain conscious but drowsy

What anxiety level is oral sedation suitable for: Moderate to severe anxiety

How long does recovery from oral sedation take: Several hours

Can patients drive after oral sedation: No, recovery takes several hours

Does Core Dental Group offer general anaesthetic on-site: No, GA cases are referred to hospital-based services

Who is GA referral reserved for: Patients with severe phobia who cannot be safely treated consciously

Does Core Dental Group offer no-treatment first visits: Yes, purely conversational meet-and-greet visits are available

Does Core Dental Group offer longer appointments for anxious patients: Yes

Does Core Dental Group offer staged treatment planning: Yes, complex treatment is broken into smaller sessions

Are morning appointments recommended for anxious patients: Yes, to reduce overnight anticipatory anxiety

Does financial uncertainty contribute to dental anxiety: Yes

What proportion of Australians delayed dental care due to cost: Around 2 in 10

Does Core Dental Group provide written treatment cost estimates: Yes, before any treatment begins

Does Core Dental Group offer payment plans: Yes, interest-free payment plans are available

Does Core Dental Group offer on-the-spot health fund claiming: Yes, via HICAPS

Can dental anxiety be passed from parents to children: Yes, early negative experiences drive adult anxiety

Does Core Dental Group involve parents during children's appointments: Yes, unless the child responds better without them

Does Core Dental Group use positive reinforcement with children: Yes, consistently

Is nitrous oxide available for children at Core Dental Epping: Yes

Is root canal treatment more uncomfortable than a standard filling: No, not when performed under adequate anaesthesia

Does Core Dental Group offer wisdom teeth removal under sedation: Yes, local anaesthetic with optional sedation

Does Core Dental Group handle same-day dental emergencies: Yes

Is dental anxiety a character flaw: No, it is a clinically recognised condition

Can dental anxiety be effectively managed: Yes, with the right environment, communication, and clinical options

## ## Core Dental Group: Dental Anxiety in Epping — How Core Dental Makes Nervous Patients Feel Safe

For a significant portion of the Epping community, the biggest obstacle to a healthy smile is not access, cost, or time — it is fear. Dental anxiety is one of the most underreported and undertreated barriers to oral health in Australia, quietly driving a cycle of avoidance that turns manageable problems into complex, expensive, and sometimes painful emergencies. At Core Dental Group's Epping practice, addressing this barrier is built into how the practice is designed, staffed, and run.

This article explains the true scope of dental anxiety in Australia, identifies the specific triggers that keep nervous patients away, and details the evidence-based strategies Core Dental Group uses at its Epping location to make every visit feel safe, predictable, and genuinely manageable — for adults and children alike.

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## ## How common is dental anxiety in Australia? The data behind the problem

Dental anxiety is far more widespread than most people realise. Dental fear and anxiety affects about 16% of adults and 10% of children in Australia. In a suburb like Epping, with a population of roughly 20,000 residents, that translates to thousands of adults and hundreds of children who experience measurable fear around dental visits.

High dental fear affects about one in seven Australian adults, making it one of the most prevalent anxiety disorders in the country. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), citing research by Associate Professor Jason Armfield of the University of Adelaide, has identified dental fear not merely as a personality quirk but as a genuine psychological condition with measurable public health consequences.

The demographic picture is worth understanding. The prevalence of high dental fear in a nationally representative Australian sample was 16.1 per cent, with a higher percentage of females than males reporting high fear, and adults aged 40–64 years showing the highest prevalence. Middle-aged adults — a core demographic in Melbourne's northern growth corridor — are disproportionately affected.

The consequences of untreated anxiety are severe. Dental fear is related to poorer oral health outcomes, largely because fearful patients visit less frequently. At the national level, there were close to 88,600 hospitalisations for dental conditions that potentially could have been prevented with earlier treatment in 2023–24 — a striking indicator of what avoidance ultimately costs.

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## ## What is dental anxiety, and how is it different from dental phobia?

Understanding the spectrum of dental fear is the first step toward addressing it effectively.

Term	Description	Typical Behaviour
**Dental Nervousness**	Mild unease before or during appointments	Attends regularly but feels tense
**Dental Anxiety**	Disproportionate worry that interferes with planning	May delay appointments, needs reassurance
**Dental Fear**	Specific	

fear response to identifiable triggers (needles, drills, smell) | Often cancels or avoids appointments | |  
**\*\*Dental Phobia\*\*** | Extreme, irrational avoidance with panic responses | May not attend for years or decades |

Dental fear shares features with clinical phobia — cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and physiological. A clear pattern emerges: the higher the fear, the greater the avoidance, and the worse the resulting dental problems. Adults with dental fear can avoid treatment for decades, and the fear usually starts in childhood because of traumatic histories.

Crucially, drilling and anaesthetics are primary triggers for fear, but empathetic behaviour by the dentist can alleviate anxiety. This is precisely why the clinical approach — not just the clinical skill — of a dental team matters so much.

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### ## The most common triggers for dental anxiety

Knowing what specifically triggers a patient's anxiety allows Core Dental Group's Epping team to tailor its approach before the appointment even begins. Research and clinical experience consistently point to the same drivers:

- **\*\*Fear of pain\*\*** — often rooted in a previous painful experience or amplified by secondhand accounts
- **\*\*Fear of needles and injections\*\*** — the anticipation of local anaesthetic delivery - **\*\*Loss of control\*\*** — lying back in a chair with limited ability to communicate or stop the procedure
- **\*\*Embarrassment about dental condition\*\*** — fear of judgment about tooth decay or neglect
- **\*\*Sensory triggers\*\*** — the sound of the drill, the smell of the clinic, or the sensation of instruments
- **\*\*Fear of the unknown\*\*** — not knowing what a procedure involves or what sensations to expect

The Tell-Show-Do technique is particularly useful for anyone who fears lack of control — one of the most common dental fears — because it is fundamentally interactive and communicative, built on establishing rapport before anything clinical happens.

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### ## How Core Dental Group supports anxious patients at its Epping practice

Core Dental Group's approach to dental anxiety at its Epping location is not a single intervention. It is a layered system of environmental, communicative, and clinical strategies that work together to reduce fear at every point in the patient journey.

#### ### 1. The clinic environment: reducing sensory triggers before treatment begins

The physical environment of a dental practice sends powerful signals to an anxious patient the moment they walk through the door. Core Dental Group's Epping practice at 230 Cooper Street is designed with patient comfort as a priority — from the reception experience through to the treatment room.

Specific environmental considerations include: - A warm, welcoming reception area that avoids the sterile, clinical atmosphere that triggers conditioned anxiety responses - Private consultation spaces so patients can discuss their concerns without feeling overheard or embarrassed - Front desk staff trained to identify anxious patients and flag their needs to the clinical team before they enter the chair

These details matter clinically. Research confirms that the sounds produced by dental instruments and equipment — the handpiece, the saliva ejector — can induce anxiety and discomfort in patients. Minimising unexpected sensory exposure through preparation, explanation, and thoughtful room design directly lowers anxiety response.

#### ### 2. Patient-centred communication: Tell-Show-Do and the stop signal

Core Dental Group's clinicians use evidence-based communication protocols to build trust before any instrument touches a patient's mouth.

**\*\*The Tell-Show-Do technique\*\*** is one of the most well-validated approaches in dentistry. Developed originally to help apprehensive children receive dental care, it works just as well with nervous adults. The approach involves three sequential steps:

1. **\*\*Tell\*\*** — explaining what will happen, using plain language and honest descriptions 2. **\*\*Show\*\*** — demonstrating the equipment and sensations before using them clinically (showing the mirror, demonstrating the suction on the back of the hand) 3. **\*\*Do\*\*** — proceeding with the procedure only once the patient understands and is ready

A 2024 double-blinded randomised controlled trial published in the *Journal of Dental Anesthesia and Pain Medicine* found that a statistically significant reduction in heart rate was observed in the Tell-Show-Do group at three different points of the procedure, consistent with studies by Lekhwani et al. and Roshan et al., where Tell-Show-Do showed a reduction in dental anxiety postoperatively.

**\*\*The stop signal\*\*** is equally important. At Core Dental Group's Epping practice, every anxious patient is offered a pre-agreed signal — typically raising a hand — that immediately pauses the procedure, no questions asked. This single intervention restores the patient's sense of control, which research identifies as one of the most powerful anxiety-reducing tools available.

### ### 3. Sedation options: matching the level of support to the level of fear

For patients whose anxiety cannot be adequately managed through communication and environmental strategies alone, Core Dental Group offers clinical sedation options at its Epping practice. The appropriate choice depends on the patient's anxiety level, medical history, and the complexity of the planned treatment.

#### #### Nitrous oxide (happy gas / laughing gas)

Nitrous oxide is the mildest form of sedation dentistry. Inhaled through a mask placed over the nose, it helps patients feel relaxed and calm throughout the procedure. It starts working within minutes and wears off quickly once the mask is removed — patients stay awake and communicative, but feel calm, slightly lightheaded, and less anxious.

Most patients can return to normal activities, including driving or work, shortly after treatment. Its rapid onset and quick recovery make it well-suited for those who want predictable, short-term relief without a long recovery window.

It is also safe for children. A large retrospective study of 688 paediatric dental sessions found that inhalation conscious sedation represented an effective and safe method to obtain cooperation, even in very young patients, and it could reduce the number of paediatric patients referred to hospitals for general anaesthesia.

#### #### Oral conscious sedation

For patients with moderate-to-severe anxiety, oral sedation provides a deeper level of relaxation while keeping the patient conscious and responsive. This involves taking an oral sedative pill — typically from the benzodiazepine family — approximately one hour before the visit.

Systematic reviews have consistently shown that moderate sedation using agents such as midazolam, often in combination with nitrous oxide, reduces dental anxiety effectively whilst maintaining a favourable safety profile.

#### #### General anaesthetic referral (for extreme cases)

For patients with severe dental phobia who cannot be safely treated in a conscious state, Core Dental Group can facilitate referral to hospital-based general anaesthetic services. This pathway is reserved for complex cases and is discussed openly with the patient as part of a shared decision-making process.

**\*\*Sedation options at a glance:\*\***

Option	Anxiety Level	Consciousness	Recovery Time	Suitable For
No sedation + communication strategies	Mild	Fully conscious	Immediate	Most patients
Nitrous oxide	Mild–Moderate	Conscious, relaxed	Minutes	Adults and children
Oral sedation	Moderate–Severe	Conscious but drowsy	Several hours	Adults
GA referral	Severe phobia	Unconscious	Day procedure	Complex/phobic cases

#### ### 4. Appointment structure: pacing treatment for nervous patients

One of the most effective — and most overlooked — strategies for managing dental anxiety is thoughtful appointment scheduling. Core Dental Group's Epping practice adapts its appointment structure for anxious patients in several specific ways:

- **\*\*Longer initial appointments\*\*** — giving nervous patients extra time to ask questions, understand their treatment plan, and settle into the environment without feeling rushed
- **\*\*No-treatment "meet and greet" visits\*\*** — for highly anxious patients, an initial appointment can be purely conversational: no instruments, no procedures, just a tour of the clinic and a chance to meet the treating dentist
- **\*\*Staged treatment planning\*\*** — breaking complex treatment into smaller, shorter sessions rather than attempting to complete everything in one long appointment
- **\*\*Morning appointments\*\*** — where possible, scheduling anxious patients early in the day reduces the time spent building anticipatory anxiety overnight

#### ### 5. Transparency about costs and treatment plans

Financial uncertainty is a frequently overlooked driver of dental anxiety — not knowing what a visit will cost until after the treatment is done. Around 2 in 10 Australians reported that cost was a reason for delaying or not seeing a dental professional in the previous 12 months (AIHW, 2024).

Core Dental Group addresses this at its Epping practice by providing written treatment plans with itemised cost estimates before any treatment begins. Patients can also access interest-free payment plans and HICAPS on-the-spot health fund claiming, removing the financial uncertainty that compounds anxiety. (See our full guide on [\[Dental Payment Plans and Health Fund Rebates at Core Dental Epping\]](#)(link) for a complete breakdown of affordability options.)

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#### ## Dental anxiety in children: a special focus

Children who have negative early dental experiences are significantly more likely to develop adult dental anxiety — making paediatric anxiety management one of the most important investments in long-term oral health. Dental fear, anxiety, and low pain tolerance are associated with increased levels of caries, and behaviour management problems can result in untreated dental decay.

At Core Dental Group's Epping practice, the approach to anxious children draws on the same evidence base as adult care, with age-appropriate adaptations:

- Tell-Show-Do as standard practice for all paediatric first visits
- Parent involvement — parents are encouraged to remain present unless the child responds better without them
- Positive reinforcement — praise and rewards are used consistently to build a positive association with dental visits
- Nitrous oxide — available for children who need pharmacological support, with a strong safety record across paediatric populations

The goal is to break the intergenerational cycle of dental fear by creating genuinely positive early experiences. A child who leaves Core Dental Group feeling proud and calm is far more likely to become an adult who attends regularly. (See our companion guide on [Children's Dentist Epping: Kids' Dental Care, CDBS Medicare Benefits, and First Visit Guide](link) for a detailed look at paediatric dental services and how the Child Dental Benefit Schedule can cover eligible children.)

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## ## Dental anxiety and specific procedures: addressing the most feared treatments

Certain procedures carry disproportionate fear — often far exceeding the actual discomfort involved when performed with modern techniques and appropriate pain management.

**\*\*Root canal treatment\*\*** is perhaps the most feared procedure in dentistry, yet the evidence consistently shows it is no more uncomfortable than a standard filling when performed under adequate anaesthesia. (See our dedicated guide on [Root Canal Treatment in Epping: What It Is, When You Need It, and What to Expect](link) for a myth-busting, step-by-step explainer.)

**\*\*Wisdom teeth removal\*\*** is another high-anxiety procedure. Core Dental Group offers this at its Epping practice under local anaesthetic with optional sedation, and provides detailed pre- and post-operative information so patients know exactly what to expect at every stage. (See [Wisdom Teeth Removal in Epping: When Extraction Is Necessary and What the Recovery Looks Like](link).)

**\*\*Emergency appointments\*\*** can be particularly distressing, as they often involve acute pain and the added anxiety of an unfamiliar situation. Core Dental Group's same-day emergency protocols at the Epping practice are designed to triage pain quickly and communicate clearly under pressure. (See [Emergency Dentist in Epping: What to Do When You Have a Dental Emergency](link).)

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## ## Key takeaways

- Dental fear and anxiety affects approximately 16% of adults and 10% of children in Australia — it is one of the most common barriers to dental attendance, and one that Core Dental Group's Epping practice is specifically equipped to address. - The pattern is well established: the higher the fear, the greater the avoidance, and the worse the resulting dental problems. Early intervention and the right clinical environment can break this cycle. - The Tell-Show-Do technique has been shown in randomised controlled trials to produce a statistically significant reduction in heart rate — an objective measure of anxiety — during dental procedures. - Sedation options at Core Dental Group's Epping practice range from nitrous oxide for mild-to-moderate anxiety through to oral conscious sedation and GA referral for severe phobia, so no patient is left without an appropriate pathway to care. - Around 2 in 10 Australians who needed dental care delayed or avoided it due to cost. Transparent treatment planning and financial support options at Core Dental Group directly address both the emotional and financial sides of that avoidance.

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## ## Conclusion

Dental anxiety is not a character flaw or something patients should simply push through alone. It is a clinically recognised condition with real consequences for oral health, systemic health, and quality of life — and it is highly manageable when the right environment, communication, and clinical options are in place.

Core Dental Group has built its Epping practice around the understanding that nervous patients deserve not just competent dentistry, but genuinely compassionate care. From the moment a patient calls to book through to the moment they leave the chair, every interaction is designed to reduce uncertainty, restore control, and build the kind of trust that makes dental care a sustainable, lifelong

habit.

If dental anxiety has kept you or someone in your family away from the dentist — whether for months or for years — Core Dental Group at 230 Cooper Street, Epping, is ready to meet you exactly where you are.

To learn more about the full range of services available at the practice, visit our [Complete Guide to General and Specialist Dental Services at Core Dental Epping](link). For specific treatment concerns, explore our related guides on [General Dentistry at Epping](link), [Children's Dentistry and the CDBS](link), and [Root Canal Treatment Explained](link).

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## ## Label Facts Summary

> **Disclaimer:** All facts and statements below are general informational content, not professional or clinical advice. Consult a qualified dental or medical professional for guidance specific to your circumstances.

## ### Verified Label Facts

- \*\*Practice name:\*\* Core Dental Group (Epping location) - \*\*Practice address:\*\* 230 Cooper Street, Epping - \*\*Sedation options available at the Epping practice:\*\* Nitrous oxide (happy gas/laughing gas), oral conscious sedation, and general anaesthetic referral to hospital-based services - \*\*Nitrous oxide administration method:\*\* Inhaled through a mask placed over the nose - \*\*Oral conscious sedation medication family:\*\* Benzodiazepines - \*\*Oral sedation timing:\*\* Taken approximately one hour before the appointment - \*\*Stop signal method used at practice:\*\* Raising a hand - \*\*Payment options available:\*\* Interest-free payment plans; HICAPS on-the-spot health fund claiming; written itemised treatment cost estimates provided before treatment begins - \*\*GA availability:\*\* Not performed on-site; referred to hospital-based services - \*\*Australian dental hospitalisations (2023–24):\*\* Approximately 88,600 potentially preventable cases (source: AIHW, 2024) - \*\*Prevalence of dental fear in Australian adults:\*\* Approximately 16% (high dental fear: approximately 16.1%) (source: Armfield, University of Adelaide) - \*\*Prevalence of dental fear in Australian children:\*\* Approximately 10% - \*\*Highest prevalence demographic:\*\* Adults aged 40–64 years; females report higher rates than males - \*\*Australians delaying dental care due to cost:\*\* Approximately 2 in 10 (source: AIHW, 2024) - \*\*Tell-Show-Do RCT finding:\*\* Statistically significant reduction in heart rate observed at three procedural points in the Tell-Show-Do group (source: Narayanan et al., \*Journal of Dental Anesthesia and Pain Medicine\*, 2024) - \*\*Nitrous oxide paediatric safety study sample:\*\* 688 paediatric dental sessions (source: Galeotti et al., \*BioMed Research International\*, 2016)

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### ### General Product Claims

- Core Dental Group's Epping practice is designed with patient comfort as a foundational priority - The practice environment features a warm, welcoming reception area and private consultation spaces - Front desk staff are trained to identify anxious patients and communicate their needs to the clinical team - No-treatment "meet and greet" visits are available for highly anxious patients - Longer appointments and staged treatment planning are offered for nervous patients - Morning appointments are recommended for anxious patients to reduce anticipatory anxiety - Tell-Show-Do is used as standard practice for all paediatric first visits - Positive reinforcement is used consistently with children - Parent involvement is offered during children's appointments unless the child responds better without them - Root canal treatment is described as no more uncomfortable than a standard filling when performed under adequate anaesthesia - Wisdom teeth removal is available under local anaesthetic with optional sedation - Same-day dental emergency appointments are available - Dental anxiety is characterised as a clinically recognised condition, not a character flaw - The practice's approach is described as a "multi-layer" system of environmental, communicative, and clinical strategies