

DENTAL CARE & RESOURCES GUIDE



2026

Sections

1. Caring for Oral Health at Home
2. Preparing for a Successful Dental Visit
3. About Medi-Cal Dental Plans
4. Medi-Cal Dental Coverage and Billing
5. Mobile Dental Hygienists (RDHAPs)
6. Sedation Dentistry
7. Options for Dental Services
8. ACRC Role in Dental Services

Disclosure Statement:

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Section 1: Caring for Oral Health at Home



A healthy mouth starts with daily brushing and flossing. For some people, oral care can be difficult. That is okay. The tips below can help make home care easier and more comfortable. For more details, see the [Access for All Smiles Guide](#). Page numbers are listed after each tip.

Notice What Feels Hard

Notice what makes brushing uncomfortable. This may include taste, texture, sound, pressure, or gagging. Implement changes if possible. See pages 4-8 of the [guide](#) for more ideas.

Use Gentle and Specialized Tools

Try soft or silicone toothbrushes, mild or unflavored toothpaste, and quiet or low-vibration electric toothbrushes. There are many tools and products to explore and try. Page 30 of the [guide](#) gives many great suggestions for alternatives to the traditional toothbrush and floss.

Keep a Predictable Routine

Switching from one activity to another can be hard. Give clear warnings such as “five more minutes.” Use timers, songs, pictures, schedules, or checklists to help prepare for brushing. See pages 4-8 and Appendix A8 of the [guide](#).

Go Little by Little

Start small. Brush only one area, use water instead of toothpaste, or brush for a short time. Slowly increase as comfort improves. See pages 4-8 of the [guide](#).

Make Brushing Fun and Positive

Use games, pretend play, songs, or brushing apps. Fun toothbrushes or guided brushing tools can increase interest and cooperation. See Appendix A8 of the [guide](#).

Try Different Positions

Brush while sitting, standing, or lying down. Try different angles to find what feels most comfortable. See pages 27-29 of the [guide](#).

Give Praise and Rewards

Praise all effort, even small steps. Use encouragement, stickers, or simple rewards to build confidence. See page 7 of the [guide](#) for more ideas.

Be Patient and Flexible

Adjust tools, timing, and routines to fit the person’s needs. Progress may be slow, and that is okay. See pages 9-11 of the [guide](#) for lots of great daily oral care tips!



Section 2: Preparing for a Successful Dental Visit

Going to the dentist can be difficult for some people. With preparation and support, dental visits can be calmer and more successful. For more details, see the [Access for All Smiles Guide](#), pages 22-26 and [Appendix A10](#).

Practice at Home

Caregivers can practice parts of the dental visit before the appointment:

- Practice laying back in a chair or on the couch
- Shine a flashlight toward the mouth
- Brush teeth using similar toothpaste as the dental office
- Use a pretend mirror and practice counting teeth
- Play videos with dental office sounds



Before the Visit

- Use a social story with pictures of the dentist and office if possible
- Use first/then statements and visual supports
- Watch videos that show what happens at the dentist
- Visit the dental office ahead of time to meet staff and see the space
- Request quieter appointment times
- Ask about shorter or multiple visits if needed

During the Dental Visit

- Share the patient's needs, preferences, and challenges with the dental team
- Ask for dimmed lights or bring sunglasses
- Bring headphones for music or videos
- Bring comfort items such as toys or weighted blankets
- Use communication tools or aids
- Ask the dentist to use "tell-show-do" and have patient use a hand mirror



End on a Positive Note! Offer praise and rewards for effort, even if the visit is not completed



Please visit the **Access for All Smiles** [Main page](#) to explore the guide by topic, video, or to access [1-hour](#) or [2-hour](#) caregiver training modules.

Section 3: About Medi-Cal Dental Plans

Medi-Cal covers dental care! The type of Medi-Cal Dental Plan a person has varies depending on where they live. People with Medi-Cal who live in Sacramento County have special dental managed care plans. For people living in all other counties, only one type of dental plan exists.

Sacramento County

If the person's Medi-Cal plan is based in Sacramento County, they have a Medi-Cal "Dental Managed Care Plan". There are three Dental Managed Care Plans in Sacramento County, and the person is assigned to one of these plans:

- Liberty
- HealthNet
- DentaQuest

For assistance with finding a dentist:

Please contact the specific assigned Medi-Cal Dental Managed Care Plan for assistance with finding a dentist. *If it is unknown which Medi-Cal Dental Managed Care Plan the person has, call HealthCare Options to find out: 1-800-430-4263, then call the plan directly to request a referral to an in-network dentist. You may also click the links below to access each plan's online provider directory search.

- Liberty Dental Plan 888-703-6999 [Medi-Cal Dentist Search](#)
- HealthNet Dental Plan 833-493-0428 [Health Net Medi-Cal Dental | Health Net](#)
- DentaQuest 833-479-1984 [California Medi-Cal Dental Coverage | DentaQuest](#)

Outside of Sacramento County

(or people within Sacramento County without a Medi-Cal Dental Managed Care Plan)

People living outside of Sacramento County have straight Medi-Cal Dental, also known as "Fee-for-Service (FFS) Medi-Cal Dental." Below is the contact number to call for assistance with finding a dentist. Click the link to explore the online Provider Directory Search.

- Medi-Cal Dental 800-322-6384 [Provider Directory Search](#)

Specialist Referrals

Sometimes a referral is needed for specialized dental services. These services include sedation, wisdom teeth extractions, root canals, and more. If the person requires a referral for specialized dental services, take any of the following steps:

1. Ask the general dentist for a referral
2. Call the Medi-Cal Dental Plan to request a referral
3. Ask the ACRC service coordinator for assistance from the ACRC Dental Coordinator

Section 4: Medi-Cal Coverage and Billing

What Does Medi-Cal Dental Cover?

All Medi-Cal Dental plans cover the same wide range of services, usually at no cost, for children and adults. Preventive services such as cleanings, exams, x-rays and fluoride are available to children every 6 months and to adults every 12 months. Other restorative and specialty services are also covered, including fillings, crowns, root canals, extractions, dentures, sedation and emergency dental services. Please visit the Smile, CA website for a full breakdown of covered services by age group: [Covered Services | Smile California](#)

What are the options if the person receives a bill for dental services?

All Medi-Cal Dental Plans cover the medically necessary dental services to ensure the patient is restored to good oral health. If a bill is received for dental services, it is usually for non-covered services that may be considered adjunctive, elective or cosmetic treatments. Some common non-covered services a dentist may bill for include bone grafts and membranes, laser treatments, specialty white crowns, implants, and more.

If a dentist is recommending non-covered services at a high out-of-pocket cost to the patient, the patient has a right to ask for only services covered by Medi-Cal, and request that the dentist follow Medi-Cal rules to secure Medi-Cal-covered services before treatment. [B&P Code § 654.3(h)(1)]. Additional information here:

https://dental.dhcs.ca.gov/MCD_documents/providers/provider_bulletins/Volume_41_Number_03.pdf

The ACRC Service Coordinator may consult with the ACRC Dental Coordinator to discuss any out-of-pocket charges that a patient may have received.

What are the options in case of a dental emergency?

If the person is experiencing severe pain, or if there are signs of infection such as fever, swelling or abscess, they should seek immediate care. Immediate care may be considered one of the following options: emergency room, urgent care, or making an urgent appointment with their dentist or primary care physician. For more information on how to navigate dental emergencies, see pages 19-21 of the [Access for All Smiles Guide](#).

If the planning team requires further assistance with finding resources for urgent dental needs, the ACRC client's Service Coordinator may consult with the ACRC Dental Coordinator to explore options.

Section 5: Mobile Dental Hygienists (RDHAPs)



"RDHAP" stands for Registered Dental Hygienist in Alternative Practice



What is an RDHAP?

RDHAPs are dental hygienists with portable dental equipment, allowing them to provide dental services to people in their homes, day programs, and other community settings.

What types of dental services do RDHAPs provide?

Cleanings, x-rays, fluoride treatments, temporary fillings, and more. RDHAPs also provide valuable oral health information, nutritional counseling, tips on how to improve home care, dental desensitization, and can provide appropriate referrals for dental services as needed.

Do RDHAPs accept Medi-Cal Dental and other dental insurance plans?

Yes, most RDHAPs accept Medi-Cal Dental. All services provided by RDHAPs are covered under the Medi-Cal Dental Plans. For additional services beyond Medi-Cal frequency or coverage limitations consider initiating a planning team discussion. If the Planning Team is interested in exploring RDHAP services, the Service Coordinator can provide a list of local RDHAPs.

[ACRC Clients are invited to join a pop-up dental clinic with local RDHAPs!](#)

Clients are invited to attend fun, client-centered dental events with the RDHAPs held in comfortable community settings! There are events every few months. Ask the client's Service Coordinator for more information; the Service Coordinator can consult with the ACRC Dental Coordinator for available upcoming events!



Section 6: Sedation Dentistry

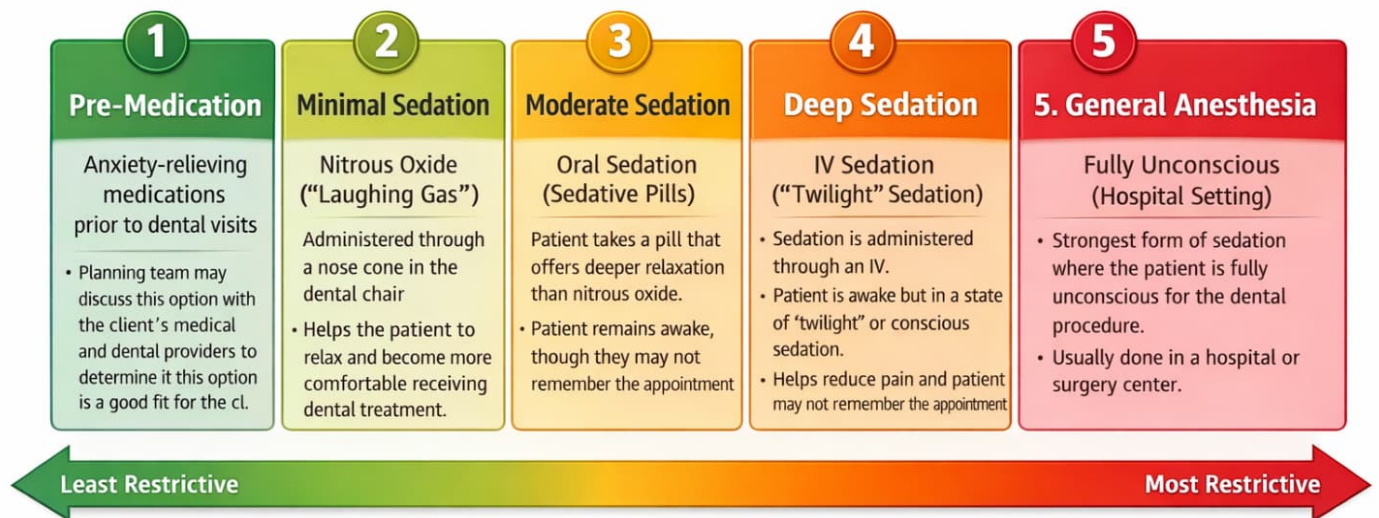
Even with many accommodations and adjustments, some people may still experience challenges with completing a successful dental visit. Dental sedation may be necessary for the person to receive comprehensive dental care.

It is important to know that there are many different levels of sedation available. If sedation is needed for dental treatment, it is preferred to select the **least restrictive** form of sedation available based on the individual's needs.

Spectrum of Sedation Options

The information and graphic below explains the spectrum of sedation options available, from least restrictive (1) to most restrictive (5). These are examples and can vary.

1. **Pre-Medication** – anti-anxiety medications can be taken prior to dental visits
2. **Minimal Sedation** – laughing gas can be administered during the visit to promote relaxation
3. **Moderate Sedation** – oral sedation using prescription medicine to induce deeper relaxation
4. **Deep Sedation** – given through an IV, the patient is sleepy but can still respond to stimuli
5. **General Anesthesia** – the patient is fully unconscious, usually in a surgery center or hospital



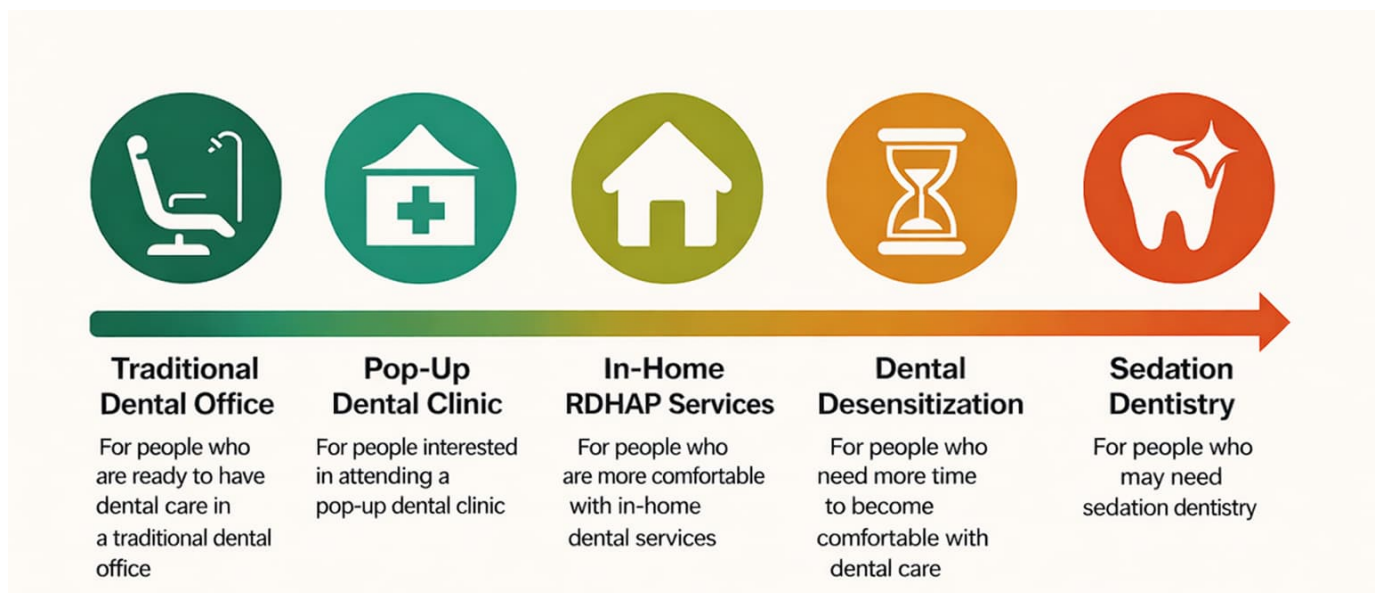
In the ACRC catchment area, there are many dental providers who can provide different levels of sedation during the dental visit. The patient and those who support them can discuss appropriate options for sedation with their medical and dental team. The ACRC Service Coordinator can consult with the ACRC Dental Coordinator for assistance in identifying providers who can offer the appropriate recommended level of sedation.

Section 7: Options for Dental Services

When it comes to dental services, there is a wide range of options designed to meet each person's individual needs. While some people can regularly access care in traditional dental settings, others may require additional supports or sedation. Understanding the range of available dental services helps ensure each person receives care that best meets their unique needs.

Spectrum of Dental Services

1. **Traditional Dental Office:** For people ready for care in a dental office. The ACRC Service Coordinator and Dental Coordinator can help explore local dentists that accept the person's dental plan and can meet their needs.
2. **Pop-Up Dental Clinics:** For those interested in attending a pop-up clinic tailored to ACRC clients. The Planning Team can work with the Service Coordinator and the Dental Coordinator to schedule a visit with an RDHAP or dentist.
3. **In-Home RDHAP Services:** For people preferring in-home care. Mobile dental hygienists (RDHAPs) visit the person's home to provide a wide range of preventive dental services.
4. **Dental Desensitization:** For people who need extra time to become comfortable with dental care. Certain RDHAPs can provide gradual, frequent in-home visits to build comfort over multiple sessions.
5. **Sedation Dentistry:** For people requiring dental care under some level of sedation. The Planning Team can work with the Service Coordinator and the Dental Coordinator to assist with exploring providers who can offer appropriate sedation options if needed.



Section 8: ACRC's Role in Dental Services

While dental services are primarily covered under generic resources such as Medi-Cal Dental and other private dental plans, ACRC does have a role in supporting clients to ensure they can access dental services that can meet their needs.

- **Maximize Resources:** Assist clients in using available generic dental resources.
- **Connect to Local Providers:** Help clients explore dental provider options who can meet specific needs.
- **Access Vended Services:** Support clients in utilizing ACRC-vended dental resources.
- **Ongoing Support:** Consult with Service Coordinators to address any and all dental needs.

ACRC Dental Coordinator

The ACRC Dental Coordinator is an internal resource to ACRC Service Coordinators and Client Services Managers to support clients in accessing most appropriate, and least restrictive dental services. The ACRC Dental Coordinator position is consultative in nature and CANNOT provide direct dental treatment or services to clients.

If you believe a consultation with the ACRC Dental Coordinator is necessary for specific dental needs as outlined in this document, please contact the ACRC Service Coordinator.