



Philadelphia FIGHT Dental Services Policies

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Your first appointment: We are invested in your *overall* health as well as your oral health! During your initial appointment, we hope to get a complete picture of both you as a person and of your teeth. For this reason, we do not usually clean teeth at the first appointment. We need to figure out what to do if you are in pain, obtain a comprehensive dental history, take x-rays, do a “tooth by tooth” exam, and allow time for any questions.

Dental treatment priorities: FIGHT Dental is a dental safety net provider, and our organization prioritizes dental emergencies, preventive care, and treatment of dental disease. We subscribe to the following standard dental treatment schedule:

Step 1: Emergencies (acute infection, relief of pain)

Step 2: Preventive care (dental sealants, regular dental cleanings, oral health education)

Step 3: Treatment of dental disease (deep cleanings, fillings, non-emergency extractions)

Step 4: Rehabilitative services (crown & bridge, partial denture)

We understand that you are probably eager to get your crown/bridge/denture and want it done as soon as possible, but please understand that it may take 2 - 3 months and sometimes as long as a year or more before the necessary dental work can be completed to get your mouth “disease free.” Your mouth must be “disease free” before your dentist can move on to rehabilitative procedures like crowns and dentures – for some, this really is “as soon as possible.”

This treatment schedule is common across all of dentistry, and care that you receive at a typical dental private practice or dental school will follow this same treatment outline. However, because of our safety net status and our focus on dental emergencies, our wait times for rehabilitative services may be several times greater than these other settings.

No dental treatment is completely risk free, but your dentist will always take reasonable steps to limit any complications related to your (or your child’s) treatment. Please understand that some treatment effects and complications, such as post-procedure sensitivity or needing a root canal after starting a filling, are common in dentistry.

Please don’t hesitate to ask any questions you may have about your treatment! It is better to ask questions *before* treatment begins than after treatment has started. During treatment it may be necessary to change or add procedures because of conditions found while working on the teeth that were not discovered during examination. Procedures that are more extensive than originally diagnosed may be required due to the presence of additional decay.

In order to have the best treatment outcomes, it is necessary to follow any and all treatment and post-treatment instructions as explained and directed to you.

Late policy: THERE IS NO GRACE PERIOD FOR LATENESS! If you arrive late to an appointment, we will do our best to see you if the schedule allows, but there is a good chance that we will need to reschedule your appointment. It does not matter whether you are two (2) minutes late or twenty (20). It does not matter if you call ahead of time to let us know that you are running late. Additionally, to get our staff home in a timely fashion, appointments that are scheduled for 4:00pm or later will *never* be seen late.

Missed/broken appointments: When we make your appointment, we are reserving space and resources for your individual needs. If you must change, reschedule, or cancel an appointment, we ask that you give us at least 48 hours' notice so that we can offer that appointment space to another patient. Please let us know as soon as you realize you won't be able to make your appointment- the more notice, the better. If you do not give us at least 48 hours' notice, or if you do not show up at all for your scheduled appointment, or if you are late for an appointment, it will be considered a "**broken appointment.**" You will be forgiven one (1) broken appointment only. At the 2nd broken appointment you will be placed on same-day/next-day scheduling status for six (6) months from the date of the 2nd broken appointment. Same/next-day scheduling status means you must call the office when you have availability, and we will put you in the schedule for that same day or the following business day, if there are openings to accommodate you. If there are no openings in the schedule you will need to call back another time. Once you are on same/next-day scheduling status, you will not be scheduled ahead for an appointment, even if you successfully show up for an appointment, until the six (6) month mark. As long as you show up and show up on time for each appointment for a period of six (6) months, you will regain your future scheduling privileges. Please note that each time another appointment is broken while on same/next-day scheduling status, the six (6) month clock resets.

Emergencies: If you have a dental emergency, whether you are an established patient, a medical or behavioral health patient who is new to FIGHT Dental, or new to Philadelphia FIGHT entirely, you can call during regular office hours and we will schedule you for Urgent Care that same day or the next business day. We may not be able to provide definitive care during your emergency appointment, but we will do our best to get you out of pain and stabilize the situation. Established patients can also call our office after hours and be transferred to our nurse triage service for dental emergencies.

Teaching protocols: Philadelphia FIGHT Family Dentistry is a teaching site for the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine and Temple University's Pre-Dental Post-Baccalaureate Program. Students and interns may be involved in your care at the discretion of your supervising dentist, at the level permitted by their training and experience. You have the right to request that students not be involved in your treatment. If you would like to request that students not be involved in your treatment, please let your dentist know.

Dental photography/radiographic images: Clinical images of patients may be acquired and utilized for the diagnosis and treatment of dental/medical conditions, payment, and healthcare operations. Please understand that non-identifiable images from your clinical record may be used for internal case presentations, clinical case reviews, and for educational purposes. No identifiable images (full-face photographs or any comparable images) will be used or shared without your explicit signed consent.