

What to Bring to Your First Appointment at a New Dental Office

By JoD Patient Guide · 6 min read

Walking into a dental office for the first time comes with a small flurry of paperwork, and it always seems to arrive at the moment you least want to fill out forms. A little preparation makes that first visit smoother for everyone. The right documents help the team get an accurate picture of your mouth and your health before anyone picks up a mirror, and they spare you the guesswork of trying to remember medication names from the waiting-room chair.

Here is a plain, practical rundown of what to bring to a dentist appointment when you are starting with a new office in Ontario.

Identification and your health card

Bring a piece of government-issued photo identification, such as a driver's licence or passport. Offices use it to confirm who you are and to keep their records accurate.

People often ask whether they need their OHIP health card. For most routine dental care in Ontario, dental treatment is not billed to OHIP, so your health card is not usually what pays for the visit. That said, many offices still like to note it on file, and it is useful to have on hand. If you are bringing a child or an older relative whose coverage differs from yours, mention that at the front desk so the correct details are recorded.

Your dental insurance or benefits information

If you have coverage, bring your dental insurance card or the details of your plan. Useful items include:

- The plan or policy number and the name of the plan member (the person whose employment or membership the coverage flows from, which may not be you).
- The insurer's name and group number.
- Whether you are the primary member, a spouse, or a dependent.

If your coverage is through the [Canadian Dental Care Plan](#), bring your membership details and confirm with the office whether they participate before treatment is planned. Coverage and any

co-payment depend on your situation, so it is worth a quick conversation at reception rather than an assumption.

A current list of medications and health conditions

This is the item people most often forget, and the one that matters most clinically. Write down, or photograph on your phone, everything you take regularly:

- Prescription medications, with doses if you know them.
- Over-the-counter products you use often, including pain relievers and antacids.
- Vitamins, herbal products, and supplements.

Also note any ongoing health conditions, allergies, and past reactions to medications or local anaesthetic. Conditions such as diabetes, heart issues, or a bleeding disorder, and medications such as blood thinners, can all influence how care is planned. You do not need to interpret any of this yourself; you simply need to report it accurately so your dentist can take it into account.

Previous dental records and X-rays

If you are coming from another office, recent records can save you from repeating X-rays and help a new team understand your history. You can ask your former office to send your file, including radiographs and any treatment notes, to the new one. Many offices will help you start that request. If you have a recent set of X-rays on a disc or by email, bring them along.

Gathering this information before a first visit is part of what a thorough new office uses to build your baseline. A Thornhill practice such as [MiNa Family Dentistry introduces itself and its team ahead of a new patient visit](#), which can help you know what to expect and what to prepare before you arrive. Reviewing an office's background in advance also makes the paperwork feel less like a cold start.

Details for anyone you are bringing along

If you are registering more than one person at once, perhaps a whole household or a parent you help care for, bring each person's information separately. Children need their own medical and medication details, and an older relative may have coverage, a physician, and a medication list that differ entirely from yours. It is easy to assume the front desk can sort this out on the day, but arriving with each person's details written down keeps the records accurate and saves a round of phone calls later.

Names of your family physician and any specialists

If you see a family doctor or a medical specialist, jot down their names and clinic contact information. Dental and medical care sometimes need to coordinate, particularly before certain procedures or when a health condition is involved. Having the contact handy avoids a follow-up phone call later.

A short list of your own questions

A first appointment is a two-way conversation. Bring any questions you have been meaning to ask, whether that is a sensitive tooth, a crown that feels off, or simply how often you should be coming in. Writing them down beats trying to remember once you are reclined in the chair.

A quick checklist to screenshot

Item	Why it helps
Photo ID and health card	Confirms your identity and keeps the file accurate
Dental insurance or CDCP details	Lets the office estimate coverage and billing
Medication and supplement list	Informs safe, appropriate treatment planning
Health conditions and allergies	Flags anything that affects care
Previous records and X-rays	Avoids duplicate imaging, builds history
Physician and specialist contacts	Supports coordinated care when needed
Your own questions	Makes the visit genuinely useful to you

Frequently asked questions

Do I need my health card at the dentist?

For most routine dental care in Ontario, treatment is not paid through OHIP, so your health card is not usually the item that covers the visit. Even so, bringing it is sensible, as many offices like to record it, and it is helpful identification. If you have private insurance or Canadian Dental Care Plan coverage, those details are what the office will use to estimate what is covered.

What documents does a new dentist need?

At a minimum, photo identification, your insurance or benefits information, and an accurate list of your medications and health conditions. Previous dental records and recent X-rays are a helpful

bonus if you can arrange them. Every office is a little different, so a quick call ahead to ask what they would like you to bring is never wasted.

Can I fill out new patient forms before I arrive?

Often, yes. Many offices email or post their new patient forms so you can complete them at home with your records in front of you. That tends to produce a more accurate history than filling them in quickly at the desk, and it shortens your wait on the day.

Sources & further reading

- [Government of Canada — Canadian Dental Care Plan](#) — eligibility, enrolment, and what the plan involves.
- [Canadian Dental Association — Your Oral Health](#) — patient guidance on visits and general dental care.
- [Ontario Dental Association — Your Oral Health](#) — Ontario-specific information for dental patients.