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Guide from Your Seattle Dentist:

How Often Should You Get a Dental Exam and Cleaning?

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Why This Guide Exists

Written by Dr. Harry Shin DDS

Many adults search online for answers like:

- *How often should I get a dental cleaning*
- *Do I need a dental exam if nothing hurts*
- *What happens during a dental cleaning*

This guide explains what routine dental visits include, why they matter, and how they help prevent more serious treatment later.

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When Should You Schedule a Dental Exam

You should consider scheduling an exam if:

- It has been more than six months since your last visit
- You notice bleeding gums
- You have tooth sensitivity
- You have visible tartar buildup
- You have not had dental X rays in several years
- Had any dental pain or swelling

Even without symptoms, routine exams help maintain long term oral health.



How Often Should You Get a Dental Exam and Cleaning

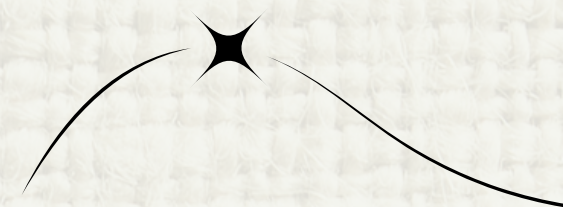
For most adults, a dental exam and cleaning every four to six months is recommended.

However, some patients benefit from more frequent visits, especially if they have:

- A history of gum disease
- Heavy tartar buildup
- Smoking history
- Diabetes
- Ongoing restorative work such as crowns or implants

A dentist will recommend a schedule based on your individual risk factors.

Do You Need a Dental Cleaning If Nothing Hurts



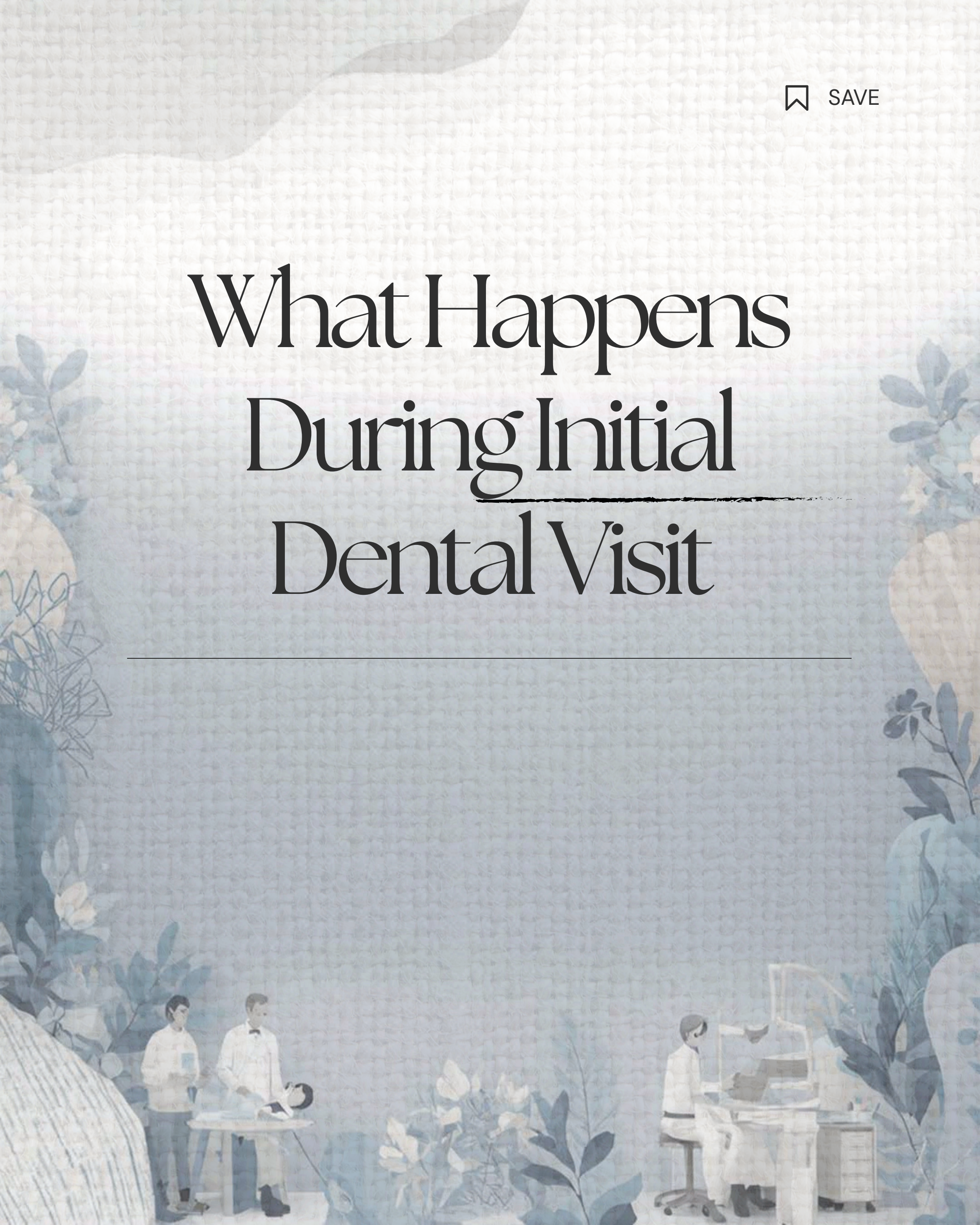
Most dental disease begins without pain.

Early cavities, gum disease, and bone loss often develop silently. By the time discomfort appears, treatment is usually more complex.

Routine dental exams are designed to detect:

- Small cavities before they require crowns
- Gum inflammation before bone loss occurs
- Cracks before teeth fracture
- Failing fillings before infection develops
- Preventive care is typically simpler and less invasive than delayed treatment.

What Happens During Initial Dental Visit



What Happens During a Dental Exam

A comprehensive dental exam usually includes:

- Evaluation for cavities and tooth fractures
- Examination of existing fillings and crowns
- Gum health assessment
- Measurement of gum pocket depths
- Bite evaluation
- Review of dental X rays when appropriate



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What Happens During a Professional Dental Cleaning

A professional cleaning removes:

- Tartar buildup above and below the gumline
- Plaque in difficult to reach areas
- Surface stains
- Bacteria contributing to gum inflammation

Routine cleanings reduce the risk of:

- Gum disease
- Bone loss
- Chronic bad breath
- Tooth loss



How Dental Cleanings Help Prevent Crowns and Root Canals

Patients often ask whether routine visits truly make a difference.

Regular exams and cleanings help prevent:

- Large cavities that require crowns
- Deep infections that require root canal therapy
- Advanced gum disease requiring surgical treatment
- Tooth fractures from undiagnosed decay

Early detection significantly reduces the likelihood of more extensive procedures.



How Oral Health Affects Overall Health- Heart Disease

Gum Disease and Heart Disease

- Periodontal disease is associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease
- Chronic gum inflammation may contribute to systemic inflammation
- Oral bacteria have been detected in atherosclerotic plaques
- The American Heart Association recognizes an association between periodontal disease and heart disease



How Oral Health Affects Overall Health- Diabetes

Gum Disease and Diabetes

- Diabetes increases the risk of gum disease
- Severe gum disease may worsen blood sugar control
- Periodontal treatment has been shown to modestly improve glycemic control in type 2 diabetes



How Oral Health Affects Overall Health- Pregnancy

Gum Disease and Pregnancy

- Gum disease has been associated with preterm birth and low birth weight
- Inflammatory mediators may influence pregnancy outcomes reported in Obstetrics & Gynecology



About Dr. Harry Shin



Dentist in Downtown Seattle
Dr. Harry Shin is a licensed dentist practicing in downtown Seattle at Moritis Shin Dentistry. He provides general, restorative, and emergency dental care with a focus on clear diagnosis, conservative treatment, and same day relief when possible. He believes dental care should be direct, transparent, and grounded in clinical evidence.

Education: New York University (Doctor of Dental Surgery), Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (General Practice Residency), University of Washington Affiliate Faculty, University of Michigan (Bachelor of Science)

Recognitions: Seattle Met Top Dentist 2026, Voted by Peer Dentists in to USA Top Dentists, Invisalign Gold Provider



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