

ASK THE EXPERT

How To Ease Fear Of The Dentist

(StatePoint) Afraid of the dentist? You're not alone. A survey by the American Association of Endodontists (AAE) reveals that such fear plagues over 80 percent of adults, and over half say it may keep them out of the dental chair.

AAE President Dr. Louis Rossman, a root canal specialist, urges people to put aside their fears, even of procedures like root canals, to ensure proper care of their mouths and teeth.

"Poor oral health and tooth loss are linked to many serious conditions, including heart disease, stroke and diabetes. So people should take steps to preserve their natural teeth," he says. "Root canals are the best way to save infected teeth and are practically painless today."

Rossman encourages patients to be honest about their anxiety, which can

help their dentist create solutions to ease worries. Knowing what to expect also eases tension, so don't be afraid to ask questions or have any procedure, even basic cleanings, explained.

Distractions also can help. For example, most dentists don't mind if you bring a portable music device and headphones to make yourself more comfortable.

Most importantly, Rossman encourages adults to see a specialist if a complicated procedure is required.

"Seeing a general dentist twice yearly is step one to good oral health. If you need a complicated procedure, like a root canal, ask for a specialist," he says. "Endodontists have advanced training and technology that make the procedure comfortable for patients."

Visit www.rootcanalspecialists.org for more tips or to find an endodontist.