

## Dental Visit

By Karen Zhang

Karen in America

口腔保健可不是每天刷牙那么简单。要想保护好自己的牙齿，除了正确刷牙外，还需要定期做牙科检查。本期我们来看看Karen在美国看牙医的经历吧！



It's a fact that many people pay little attention to their teeth until they feel discomfort. I'm one of them. My gums<sup>[牙龈]</sup> bled<sup>[出血, 流血]</sup> a bit when I brushed my teeth. So, this spring I visited my dentist—my first time in America when asked how long it'd been since I'd seen a dentist, I said it was at least a decade. My answer would have shocked my dentist, as Americans are recommended to have a dental visit every six months.

After my dentist examined my oral X-rays, she said without hesitation, "You have gum disease. You need a deep cleaning." Seeing me looking bewildered<sup>[使迷惑, 使难住]</sup>, she explained, "We'll numb<sup>[使麻木]</sup> your gums and then clean your teeth. We'll see how it goes from there." Off she went. (After having me wait for her for nearly an hour, she only saw me for less than ten minutes. It's not uncommon for a doctor's visit in America.)

I returned to the dentist's office two weeks later as scheduled for a deep cleaning

appointment. This time, I was greeted by a dental hygienist right away. I overheard<sup>[无意中听到]</sup> his name is George. Probably George had seen nervousness on my face, he tried to tell jokes to relax me while getting me prepared. He was no doubt less stiff than the dentists I saw in China.

As my mouth was getting numb, I felt like my face was swollen<sup>[肿胀]</sup>. Lying on a reclining chair<sup>[躺椅]</sup>, face up, I had no idea what George was doing in my mouth. With a seemingly long and pointy metal tool in his hand, he was preoccupied with what he was doing. I learned later that the tool he used is called an ultrasonic scaler<sup>[超声波除垢器]</sup>, which vibrates at a frequency that breaks down dental tartar<sup>[牙垢]</sup> on the surfaces of one's teeth.

It was considerate that George had me put on a pair of dark glasses to dim<sup>[使暗淡]</sup> the bright operating light above my face. Just when I wondered how to gargle<sup>[漱口]</sup> in my mouth, as there was no water or mini bowl attached to the chair, George put an electric-powered tube into my mouth and said, "Close your mouth, open." I followed. After a few tries, I realized this noisy tube was like a vacuum<sup>[真空]</sup> cleaner, cleaning my mouth for George's meticulous<sup>[一丝不苟的]</sup> procedure.

"You've been brave," he praised now and then. Finally, after an hour or so, his job was done! Before I departed from that frightful chair, George showed me how to properly brush and floss<sup>[洁牙线]</sup>. Flossing is new to me, 'cause as I always thought brushing my teeth was enough. But flossing is truly essential to prevent gum disease.

Yes, if you haven't done so, start now! You should practice good oral hygiene<sup>[卫生]</sup> every day by brushing and flossing, and don't forget to have a dental visit periodically and soon! 🍀