

Your First Specialist Appointment — What to Expect

Canonical: <https://directory.collinsstreetspecialistcentre.com.au/patient-resources/your-first-specialist-appointment-what-to-expect/>

Description:

What to expect at your first dental specialist appointment at CSSC Melbourne. Referrals, what to bring, consultations, costs and treatment planning.

Details:

Product Facts

| Attribute | Value | |-----|-----| | Practice name | Collins Street Specialist Centre (CSSC) | | Practice type | Multi-disciplinary dental specialist centre | | Location | Manchester Unity Building, Level 4, 220 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000 | | Phone | (03) 9654 6979 | | Referral required | No — self-referral welcome | | First appointment duration | 30–60 minutes | | Booking methods | Phone or email | | Specialist registration | AHPRA-registered, specialist registration (not general dental) | | Specialist training | Postgraduate specialist Master's or doctoral programme | | On-site imaging | Intraoral X-rays, OPG (panoramic), CBCT (3D cone beam), digital intraoral scans, clinical photographs | | Imaging results | Available immediately on-site | | Specialties available | Orthodontics, Endodontics, Periodontics, Prosthodontics, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, Paediatric Dentistry | | Treatment plan provided | Yes — written, with fee estimate, timeline and rebate information | | Decision required on the day | No | | Payment methods | EFTPOS, credit card, cash, HICAPS (health insurance on-the-spot) | | Staged treatment available | Yes, where clinically appropriate | | Private health insurance claims | Processed on the day via HICAPS | | Medicare eligibility | Yes — primarily oral & maxillofacial surgery; CDBS for eligible children | | Child Dental Benefits Schedule | Up to \$1,095 over two years; children aged 0–17 | | Public transport access | Collins Street trams (directly outside); Flinders Street & Melbourne Central stations nearby | | Parking | Multiple facilities in immediate vicinity | | Internal referrals | Yes — shared clinical records across all specialists within CSSC | | Post-consultation report | Sent to referring dentist outlining findings and recommendations |

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Collins Street Specialist Centre (CSSC): A multi-disciplinary dental specialist practice in Melbourne

Where is CSSC located: Manchester Unity Building, 220 Collins Street, Melbourne CBD

What level is CSSC on: Level 4

What is the phone number for CSSC: (03) 9654 6979

Is a referral required to book at CSSC: No, self-referral is welcome

Can patients self-refer to CSSC: Yes

Does self-referral affect insurance rebates: Some health funds require a formal referral for rebates to apply

Who can refer patients to CSSC: General dentists, medical doctors, or patients themselves

Can a GP refer a patient to CSSC: Yes

Can an internal referral occur within CSSC: Yes, between specialists at the same centre

How long is a first specialist appointment at CSSC: Typically 30–60 minutes

How do you book an appointment at CSSC: By phone or email

Will reception confirm the right specialist when booking: Yes

Will costs be explained before the appointment: Yes, at the time of booking

Can patients send referral letters in advance: Yes, ahead of the appointment

Should X-rays be sent before the appointment: Yes, if available

Is a referral letter required to bring to the appointment: No, a copy is equally suitable as the original

Should patients bring a medication list: Yes

Should supplements be included on the medication list: Yes

Should patients bring their Medicare card: Yes

Should patients bring their private health insurance card: Yes

Can patients bring a support person to the appointment: Yes

Are pre-appointment forms available online: Yes, sent via email before the appointment

Can forms be completed on arrival instead: Yes

How much extra time should be allowed for on-arrival forms: 10–15 minutes

Are all CSSC specialists registered with AHPRA: Yes

What does AHPRA stand for: Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Can patients verify a specialist's registration: Yes, via the AHPRA public register

Do CSSC specialists hold specialist registration: Yes, not just general dental registration

What additional training do dental specialists have: Postgraduate specialist Master's or doctoral programme

Is the first appointment primarily a consultation: Yes

Will the specialist explain their role at the start: Yes

Does the specialist ask about symptoms during the consultation: Yes

Does the specialist ask about the patient's goals: Yes

What does an orthodontist assess at CSSC: Tooth alignment, bite, jaw growth, facial profile and smile aesthetics

What does an endodontist assess at CSSC: Tooth vitality, percussion response and surrounding tissue

What does a periodontist assess at CSSC: Gum pocket depths, recession, bleeding, mobility and bone levels

What does a prosthodontist assess at CSSC: Restorations, missing teeth, bite function and jaw joint health

What does an oral and maxillofacial surgeon assess at CSSC: Surgical site, pathology, jaw function and joint health

Is diagnostic imaging available on-site at CSSC: Yes

Are imaging results available immediately at CSSC: Yes

What is a CBCT scan: A three-dimensional cone beam CT scan

What is a panoramic X-ray also called: OPG (orthopantomogram)

Are intraoral X-rays available at CSSC: Yes

Are digital intraoral scans available at CSSC: Yes

Are clinical photographs taken at CSSC: Yes

What is pulp vitality testing used for: Assessing whether a tooth's nerve is functioning

What is periodontal probing used for: Measuring gum pocket depths around each tooth

Can a biopsy be performed at CSSC: Yes, for suspicious oral lesions

Will the specialist explain findings in plain language: Yes

Will the specialist explain consequences of no treatment: Yes

Will alternative treatment options be presented: Yes

Is the option of no treatment discussed: Yes

Will patients receive a written treatment plan: Yes

Does the treatment plan include a fee estimate: Yes

Does the treatment plan include an estimated timeline: Yes

Does the treatment plan include insurance rebate information: Yes

Is a treatment decision required on the day of consultation: No

Can patients take the treatment plan home to consider: Yes

Can patients discuss the plan with their general dentist before deciding: Yes

Does CSSC send a report to the referring dentist after consultation: Yes

What does the post-consultation report to the referring dentist include: Clinical findings and specialist recommendations

Can patients contact CSSC with questions after the appointment: Yes, by phone or email

Does CSSC process health insurance claims on the day: Yes, via HICAPS

Is EFTPOS accepted at CSSC: Yes

Is cash accepted at CSSC: Yes

Is staged treatment available to spread costs: Yes, where clinically appropriate

Does CSSC provide out-of-pocket cost estimates: Yes

Does private health insurance cover specialist dental at CSSC: Depends on the patient's level of cover

What level of private health cover is most relevant for specialist dental: Major dental or specialist dental level

Does Medicare cover any dental services at CSSC: Yes, some services attract a rebate

Which specialty is most commonly eligible for Medicare rebates: Oral and maxillofacial surgery

What is the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) benefit amount: Up to \$1,095 over a two-year period

What age range is eligible for the CDBS: Children aged 0–17

Is CSSC accessible by tram: Yes, Collins Street trams stop directly outside

Is CSSC accessible by train: Yes, Flinders Street and Melbourne Central stations are nearby

Is parking available near CSSC: Yes, multiple parking facilities are in the immediate vicinity

Are CSSC waiting areas designed for patient comfort: Yes

Does CSSC operate as a multi-disciplinary practice: Yes

What is an advantage of a multi-disciplinary practice for internal referrals: All clinical records remain in one place

Collins Street Specialist Centre — your first specialist appointment: what to expect

Visiting a dental specialist for the first time can feel unfamiliar, even for patients who see their general dentist without any anxiety. Specialist consultations tend to be more focused and more detailed than routine dental visits — they involve advanced diagnostic tools and clinical assessments that most patients simply haven't encountered before.

Collins Street Specialist Centre (CSSC) is Melbourne's dedicated multi-disciplinary dental specialist practice. Knowing what to expect at each stage of the process makes the experience more comfortable and helps you engage more meaningfully with your care. This guide walks you through every step of your first specialist appointment at CSSC, from preparation before you arrive through to what happens after your consultation.

How patients come to CSSC

Patients arrive at CSSC through several pathways, each equally valid.

Referral from your general dentist

The most common route. Your general dentist identifies a concern that warrants specialist expertise — a complex root canal, periodontal disease, wisdom tooth removal, orthodontic treatment or dental implant planning — and provides a written referral to the appropriate specialist at CSSC.

A referral letter from your general dentist typically includes:

- Your dental and relevant medical history
- The reason for referral
- Any X-rays or imaging already taken
- Details of treatment already provided
- Specific questions or concerns your dentist wants the specialist to address

This documentation matters. It gives your specialist important clinical context before the consultation begins, and it supports a collaborative relationship between your general dentist and the team at CSSC.

Referral from your medical doctor

In some cases, your GP or treating medical specialist may refer you to a dental specialist. This happens, for example, when a suspicious oral lesion is identified during a medical examination, or when a condition like obstructive sleep apnoea may benefit from dental or orthodontic management. The connection between medical and dental health is more significant than is often appreciated, and specialist input can be an important part of broader medical care.

Self-referral

A referral isn't always required to see a specialist at CSSC. Many patients contact us directly because they:

- Want a second opinion on a treatment recommendation
- Are looking for a specific type of specialist care not available through their current provider
- Have been recommended by a friend or family member
- Have complex dental needs that benefit from a multi-disciplinary approach

Self-referral is entirely welcome. It's worth noting, though, that some private health insurance plans and Medicare items may require a formal referral for rebates to apply. Our reception team can advise you on this when you book.

Internal referral

If you're already a patient at CSSC under the care of one specialist, they may refer you to a colleague in another specialty within the centre. This is one of the practical advantages of a multi-disciplinary practice — internal referrals are straightforward, and all your clinical records stay in one place, accessible to each treating specialist involved in your care.

Before your appointment

Booking

When you contact us to book your first appointment — by phone or email — our reception team will:

- ****Confirm the right specialist**** — based on your referral or the nature of your concern, they'll schedule you with the most appropriate specialist for your situation.
- ****Provide appointment details**** — including the date, time, expected duration (first appointments are typically 30–60 minutes) and your location within the building.
- ****Explain costs**** — they'll provide an estimate of the consultation fee and advise whether any out-of-pocket costs are likely, so there are no surprises.
- ****Request your referral**** — if you have one, they'll ask you to send it ahead of time, along with any X-rays or previous clinical records.

What to bring

To make the most of your first appointment, please bring:

- ****Your referral letter**** — if you have one; the original or a copy is equally suitable
- ****Any X-rays or imaging**** — digital files, CDs or printed films from your referring dentist; if your dentist sent these electronically, let our team know in advance
- ****A list of your current medications**** — including prescription medications, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and supplements
- ****Your medical history**** — details of any medical conditions, known allergies, previous surgeries and hospitalisations
- ****Your private health insurance card**** — if you have private health cover
- ****Your Medicare card**** — some specialist dental services attract a Medicare rebate, particularly in oral and maxillofacial surgery
- ****Previous dental records**** — if you have a complex dental history, a treatment summary or records from previous treating dentists can provide useful clinical context
- ****A list of questions**** — it's easy to forget things in the moment; writing them down in advance means nothing important gets missed
- ****A support person**** — you're welcome to bring a family member, friend or partner, particularly if you're anxious or anticipate needing help remembering what was discussed

Pre-appointment forms

You may be asked to complete medical history and consent forms before your appointment. These are available in one of two ways:

- **Online** — sent to you via email before your appointment for completion at your convenience - **On arrival** — available at reception; if completing forms on arrival, allow an extra 10–15 minutes

Completing these forms accurately is important. They give your specialist a clear picture of your overall health and allow for safe, well-informed treatment planning from the start.

The initial consultation

Your first appointment with a specialist at CSSC is primarily a consultation — a structured opportunity for the specialist to understand your clinical situation, conduct a thorough examination and develop an appropriate treatment plan.

Meeting your specialist

Your specialist will introduce themselves and explain their role. All specialists at CSSC are registered with AHPRA (the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency) and hold specialist registration in their specific field of dentistry. Specialist registration is distinct from general dental registration — it reflects the completion of extensive postgraduate training, typically a specialist Master's or doctoral programme, beyond a general dental degree. Patients who want to verify their specialist's registration can do so through the AHPRA public register.

Discussion of your concerns

The specialist will begin by asking about:

- **Why you're here** — the specific concern that brought you, or that your referring dentist identified - **Symptoms** — any pain, swelling, sensitivity, bleeding or other symptoms you've experienced, including when they started, how severe they are and what seems to aggravate or relieve them - **Dental history** — previous treatments, any complications and your broader experience with dental care - **Medical history** — relevant medical conditions, current medications, known allergies and lifestyle factors that may be clinically relevant - **Your goals** — what you hope to achieve through treatment, particularly for consultations with an aesthetic or orthodontic focus

This is a two-way conversation. Your specialist is interested not only in the clinical picture but in your priorities, concerns and expectations — all of which shape a treatment plan suited to your circumstances.

Clinical examination

The specialist will conduct a focused clinical examination within their area of expertise:

- **Orthodontist** — assessment of tooth alignment, bite relationship, jaw growth patterns, facial profile and smile aesthetics - **Endodontist** — detailed examination of the tooth in question, including vitality testing (assessing whether the nerve is functioning), percussion testing (tapping the tooth) and palpation of surrounding tissues - **Periodontist** — comprehensive periodontal charting (measuring gum pocket depths around every tooth), assessment of gum recession, bleeding on probing, tooth mobility and supporting bone levels - **Prosthodontist** — evaluation of existing dental restorations, missing teeth, bite function, jaw joint health and any aesthetic concerns - **Oral and maxillofacial surgeon** — examination of the surgical site, assessment of any pathology, and evaluation of jaw function and joint health - **Paediatric dentist** — age-appropriate examination of teeth, gum health, dental development and, where relevant, behaviour assessment

Diagnostic imaging

Depending on your clinical situation, the specialist may take new imaging or review imaging provided by your referring practitioner. Imaging available at CSSC includes:

- **Intraoral X-rays** — targeted X-rays of individual teeth or specific areas of concern - **Panoramic X-ray (OPG)** — a full-mouth overview image providing a broad clinical picture - **Cone beam CT (CBCT)** — a three-dimensional scan providing detailed views of teeth, bone and surrounding anatomical structures; particularly useful for implant planning, surgical planning, complex endodontic cases and orthodontic assessment - **Clinical photographs** — standardised photographs of your teeth, smile and facial profile for records and treatment planning - **Digital intraoral scans** — used to create precise digital models of your teeth, particularly relevant for orthodontic and prosthodontic treatment planning

All imaging is available on-site at CSSC, which means results are available immediately — there's no waiting for films from an external radiology provider.

Special tests

Depending on your specialist and clinical presentation, additional diagnostic tests may be performed:

- **Pulp vitality testing** (endodontics) — using cold, electric or heat stimulation to assess whether a tooth's pulp tissue is responding normally - **Periodontal probing** (periodontics) — systematic measurement of pocket depths around each tooth to map the extent and distribution of periodontal disease - **Bite analysis** (prosthodontics/orthodontics) — using articulating paper or digital occlusal analysis to assess how the upper and lower teeth come together - **Biopsy** (oral surgery) — where a suspicious lesion is identified, a small tissue sample may be taken and submitted for laboratory analysis to establish a definitive diagnosis

Treatment planning

After the examination and any necessary imaging, your specialist will discuss their findings and present their recommendations clearly, without unnecessary clinical jargon.

Diagnosis

Your specialist will explain:

- **What they found** — a clear explanation of the diagnosis in accessible language - **Why it matters** — the clinical significance of the findings and the likely consequences if the condition is left untreated - **Treatment options** — the available approaches, with an honest account of the advantages and limitations of each

Treatment options

In many cases, more than one treatment pathway is available. Your specialist will explain:

- **The recommended approach** — and the clinical reasoning behind it - **Alternative options** — including more conservative or more comprehensive approaches where these exist - **The option of no treatment** — including an honest account of the likely clinical trajectory if you choose to defer or decline

Understanding all available options — their respective risks, benefits and implications — is what makes it possible to reach a genuinely informed decision about your care.

Treatment plan document

After your consultation, you'll typically receive a written treatment plan that includes:

- Your diagnosis and the recommended treatment - The number and type of appointments required to complete treatment - An estimated timeline from commencement to completion - An itemised fee

estimate for each component of treatment - Insurance and rebate information, including estimated out-of-pocket costs after private health insurance or Medicare rebates are applied

There's no expectation that you decide at the appointment. You're encouraged to take the treatment plan home, consider it carefully, discuss it with family or your general dentist, and contact us when you're ready to proceed.

Questions to ask your specialist

Having questions prepared in advance is one of the most effective ways to get the most from your first consultation. The following may be a useful starting point.

About your condition

- What exactly is the problem, and what caused it? - How significant is it clinically? - What is the likely outcome if I choose not to treat it? - Is this urgent, or is there time to consider my options?

About treatment

- What treatment options are available to me? - Which do you recommend, and what is your reasoning? - What are the risks and potential complications? - What is the evidence base for this treatment, and what are the expected success rates? - How many of these procedures have you performed? - How long will treatment take from start to finish? - Will I need to take time away from work? - What level of discomfort should I expect during or after the procedure?

About costs

- What will the total cost of treatment be? - Is any component covered by Medicare or my private health insurance? - What will my out-of-pocket costs be after rebates? - Are payment plans or staged treatment options available? - Are there any additional costs that might arise during treatment?

About follow-up

- How many follow-up appointments will be required? - What does recovery involve, and how long does it typically take? - When can I expect to see the final outcome? - Will I need ongoing maintenance or monitoring after treatment is complete?

Insurance and costs

Private health insurance

If you hold private health insurance with dental cover — particularly at the major dental or specialist dental level — a portion of your treatment costs may be rebated by your fund. The amount depends on your level of cover and your fund's own fee schedule.

A few practical steps:

- Check your coverage before your appointment by contacting your fund directly or reviewing your policy online - Bring your insurance card so claims can be processed on the day - Ask about gap payments — our reception team can provide estimates of your out-of-pocket costs after insurance rebates are applied

Medicare

Some dental specialist services attract a Medicare rebate. This is particularly relevant for:

- ****Oral and maxillofacial surgery**** — many surgical procedures are eligible for Medicare rebates, particularly those performed in a hospital setting - ****Cleft palate and other congenital conditions**** — treatment may be covered under specific Medicare items - ****Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS)**** — eligible children aged 0–17 may receive up to \$1,095 in benefits over a two-year period for basic

dental services

Our reception team can advise you on applicable Medicare items when you book or at your appointment.

Payment options

Costs are discussed transparently at CSSC. Payment options include:

- EFTPOS, credit card and cash - Health insurance claims processed on the spot via HICAPS - Staged treatment to distribute costs across the treatment timeline, where clinically appropriate

The CSSC experience

Your first visit to Collins Street Specialist Centre is designed to be informative, unhurried and free from pressure.

Location

CSSC is located in the Manchester Unity Building at 220 Collins Street, Melbourne CBD — a heritage art deco building that is centrally situated and easily accessible:

- **Train** — Flinders Street and Melbourne Central stations are both within comfortable walking distance - **Tram** — Collins Street trams stop directly outside the building - **Car** — multiple parking facilities are located in the immediate vicinity

What to expect on arrival

When you arrive at CSSC:

1. **Reception** — check in at reception and complete any outstanding forms 2. **Waiting area** — our waiting areas are comfortable and well-appointed, designed to help you feel at ease before your appointment 3. **Your appointment** — you'll be escorted to the consultation room by the specialist's clinical assistant 4. **After your appointment** — return to reception to schedule any follow-up appointments and to process payment or insurance claims

Communication and follow-up

After your consultation at Collins Street Specialist Centre:

- **Report to your referring dentist** — if you were referred, your specialist will send a detailed clinical report to your referring dentist outlining their findings and recommendations, supporting continuity of care and keeping your general dentist fully informed - **Written treatment plan** — you'll receive a written record of the proposed treatment and associated costs - **Questions welcome** — if questions arise after your appointment, contact our team by phone or email at any time

Taking the next step

Your first specialist appointment is about understanding your clinical situation and knowing what options are available to you. There's no obligation to proceed with treatment, and no decision needs to be made on the day.

At Collins Street Specialist Centre, well-informed patients are best placed to make meaningful decisions about their care. Our role is to provide expert clinical assessment, clear and honest explanations, and considered recommendations grounded in specialist training and evidence-based practice. What you choose to do with that information is entirely your decision, and we'll support you through whichever path you choose.

If you're ready to book your first specialist consultation, we'd be glad to hear from you.

****Phone:**** (03) 9654 6979 ****Location:**** Manchester Unity Building, Level 4, 220 Collins Street,
Melbourne VIC 3000

Your first specialist visit at CSSC — expert care delivered with clarity, warmth and respect for your time.
