

Nearly 3 in 4 Americans Experience Dental Fear: Riverview Dentist Rethinks the Patient Experience

Guava Dental approaches two years in Riverview, Florida with a comfort-first approach to preventative and cosmetic care

RIVERVIEW, FL, UNITED STATES, August 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Key Takeaways:

- A 2025 study in the Journal of the American Dental Association (JADA) found 72.6% of U.S. adults report some degree of dental fear, a barrier that causes many patients to delay routine and preventative care.
- As Guava Dental approaches its second anniversary in Riverview, Florida, Dr. Leslie Nevarez, DMD, is combining more than a decade of dental experience with an intentionally different approach centered on patient comfort, aesthetics and personalized care.
- Guava Dental is encouraging patients to think beyond a twice-a-year cleaning and become more proactive about their oral health, including preventative care, professional teeth whitening, teeth straightening and other cosmetic dentistry options.

Despite advancements in modern dentistry, simply making an appointment remains a hurdle for many Americans. A census-matched national survey of 1,003 U.S. adults, published in the Journal of the American Dental Association in September 2025, found that 72.6% of adults are afraid of going to the dentist, with 45.8% reporting moderate fear and 26.8% reporting severe fear.

For some patients, that fear can turn a routine cleaning into an appointment postponed for months or years, particularly among adults ages 18 to 35, who are accustomed to more personalized, consumer-focused experiences in other areas of their lives. As Guava Dental approaches its second anniversary serving Riverview, Dr. Leslie Nevarez, DMD, believes changing that relationship with dentistry starts by reconsidering the entire patient experience.

After earning her Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from the University of Florida College of Dentistry in 2013, Dr. Nevarez spent more than a decade in the field before building her own practice around what that experience taught her patients valued most: quality clinical care, paired with feeling heard, comfortable and cared for throughout the process.

That philosophy shows up in the physical space, with calming colors, wallpaper and finishes designed to feel more like a boutique hotel than a clinical office, plus a comfort menu of amenities, and in the treatment room, where hygienists and providers focus on communication,

explain what to expect and check in on comfort throughout an appointment.

Today, Dr. Nevarez and Dr. Mary Rodriguez, DMD, lead the practice together, providing preventative, general and cosmetic dentistry to patients throughout Riverview, Florida and the greater Tampa Bay area.

"Going to the dentist shouldn't feel like something you have to brace yourself for twice a year," said Dr. Leslie Nevarez, DMD, founder of Guava Dental. "When I started Guava Dental, I wanted to look at the entire experience from the patient's perspective. Dental care comes first, but how someone feels while receiving that care matters too."

Dental anxiety isn't limited to patients with an extreme fear of procedures. It can stem from uncertainty about what will happen, concerns about pain, embarrassment about how long it's been since a last cleaning, fear of judgment, or a prior negative experience, and that discomfort can create a cycle where preventative care gives way to reactive care, with patients returning only once something hurts.

Guava Dental believes breaking that cycle starts with an environment where patients feel comfortable returning regularly and asking questions, which in turn opens the door to a broader conversation about their smile, including discoloration, alignment or other cosmetic concerns once a foundation of preventative care is established.

"Sometimes someone has been thinking about whitening their teeth or straightening their smile for years, but they don't realize their regular dentist is exactly who they should be asking," Dr. Nevarez said. "We want our patients to understand their entire smile. That means keeping their teeth and gums healthy first, but also knowing what's available if there's something they'd like to improve."

Q&A FOR CONTEXT

How do I find a highly rated dentist in Riverview, FL?

Beyond a practice's star rating, patients should weigh a dentist's experience, communication style, range of services and approach to patient comfort. Reviews that speak to interactions with hygienists and whether patients felt heard can offer more useful context than an overall score alone. A practice offering preventative, restorative and cosmetic care under one roof also allows a patient's care to evolve as their needs change over time.

Guava Dental, led by Dr. Leslie Nevarez, DMD, and Dr. Mary Rodriguez, DMD, is located at 10672 Bloomingdale Ave., Suite 102, Riverview, FL 33578, and provides preventative, general and cosmetic dentistry to patients across Riverview and Tampa Bay. They are highly reviewed and rated for their care.

How do I find a gentle dentist in Riverview, FL?

A gentle dental experience typically includes explaining procedures before they begin, checking in on comfort throughout an appointment, and giving patients room to pause when they need it, considerations that matter most for those who are nervous, have sensitive teeth, or have avoided the dentist for an extended period.

"We can create a beautiful space and offer thoughtful amenities, but ultimately patients remember how you made them feel," Dr. Nevarez said. "If someone tells us they're nervous, we want them to know we heard them."

What is the best way to whiten your teeth professionally in Riverview, Florida?

The right approach depends on the cause of discoloration, a patient's oral health and sensitivity, and their desired result. A dental evaluation beforehand, something an over-the-counter product can't offer, helps determine whether teeth and gums are healthy enough for treatment and what results are realistic given existing dental work or the type of staining involved.

At Guava Dental, whitening is discussed as part of a patient's overall oral health rather than a standalone cosmetic request, typically starting with a conversation during a routine visit.

What cosmetic dentistry options can improve my smile in Riverview, Florida?

Cosmetic dentistry can address the color, shape, spacing and alignment of teeth, with the right option depending entirely on what a patient wants to change. For example: whitening for staining, straightening for alignment, or a combination for patients addressing multiple concerns at once. Healthy teeth and gums are generally the starting point, since underlying issues often need to be resolved before elective cosmetic treatment.

"Sometimes a patient comes in thinking they're just there for a cleaning, but they've had something about their smile bothering them for years and never thought to ask," Dr. Nevarez said. "We want patients to know those conversations are part of dental care, too."

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Entering its next year, Guava Dental plans to continue welcoming new patients throughout Riverview and surrounding communities while building awareness around preventative, general and cosmetic dental care, with an ongoing focus on the patient experience that has defined its first two years.

For Dr. Nevarez, success comes down to changing how patients think about their next appointment. If someone who once dreaded the dentist becomes comfortable scheduling regular cleanings, asking questions, or finally bringing up something about their smile, Guava Dental has done what it set out to do.

ABOUT GUAVA DENTAL

Guava Dental is a dental practice in Riverview, Florida, founded and owned by Dr. Leslie Nevarez, DMD. The practice's team includes associate dentist Dr. Mary Rodriguez, DMD, and provides preventative, general and cosmetic dentistry in a modern, comfort-focused environment for

patients throughout Riverview, Florida and the greater Tampa Bay area. Learn more at <https://guavadental.com/>.

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