

# Visual Social Narratives

Visual social narratives are simple descriptions of what to expect in different situations.

Photos and clear sentences walk a person through the predictable steps of a patient's experience.

## Why they're helpful:

- **Reduce anxiety:** Knowing what to expect ahead of time helps individuals feel calmer. Visual stories help prepare patients so there are fewer surprises.
- **Simplified information:** Verbal descriptions alone can make concepts feel abstract and confusing. Pairing words with pictures better illustrates what will happen. This allows us to better imagine being in a particular space and situation. This makes complex or unfamiliar situations feel more manageable.
- **Support independence:** Visual stories allow patients to review the information many times and at their own speed, until they feel comfortable. The knowledge gained supports feelings of autonomy and improves confidence during their appointment.
- **Appropriate for nearly all ages, developmental levels, and cognitive abilities:** Everyone can benefit from a better understanding of what to expect.

## Who benefits:

- New patients preparing for an appointment
- Adults and children who feel anxious about visiting the dentist
- Individuals with autism, anxiety, or sensory sensitivities
- Individuals who use visual aids and supports in other settings

## How to use:

- Begin reading the visual social narrative a few days or up to a full week before the appointment.
- It can be helpful to print the narrative to allow access throughout the day.
- Introduce the narrative in a calm setting.
- Read in a neutral or positive tone.
- If desired, personalize with names or other details. Modify in any way that is helpful to you.
- Revisit the narrative daily, as often as needed.
- Review again before leaving for the appointment. It may be helpful to bring a copy for reference.

# MY APPOINTMENT AT Top Tooth



I have a dentist appointment in \_\_\_\_ days. The dentist helps keep my teeth clean and healthy.



Having clean teeth and a healthy mouth allows me to eat and talk without pain, prevents bad breath, and helps me feel confident in my smile!



MY APPOINTMENT AT  
**Top Tooth**

I will ride to the dental office with my grown up. My grown up can stay with me the whole time. We will walk into the Top Tooth Dentistry door.

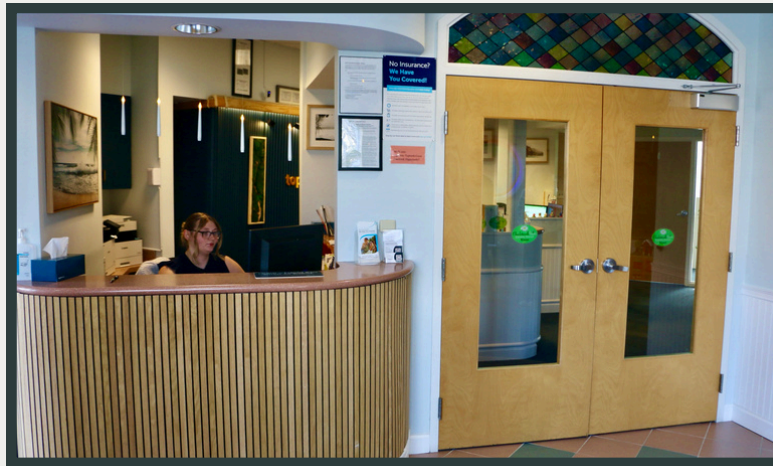


We will walk into the building, turn right, and enter the waiting room.



MY APPOINTMENT AT  
**Top Tooth**

When we enter the office, we will walk up to the desk, and my grown up will tell the receptionist my name.



Then I will wait in the waiting room for my name to be called. While I wait, I can play with the toys or watch the movie on their tv.



MY APPOINTMENT AT  
**Top Tooth**

When it is my turn, someone will call my name. They will measure my weight and height in the waiting room.



Sometimes I will need special pictures of my teeth, called x-rays. I can ask if I need x-rays today. If I do, I will sit in a chair with a weighted vest on, and they will take pictures with their special machine.

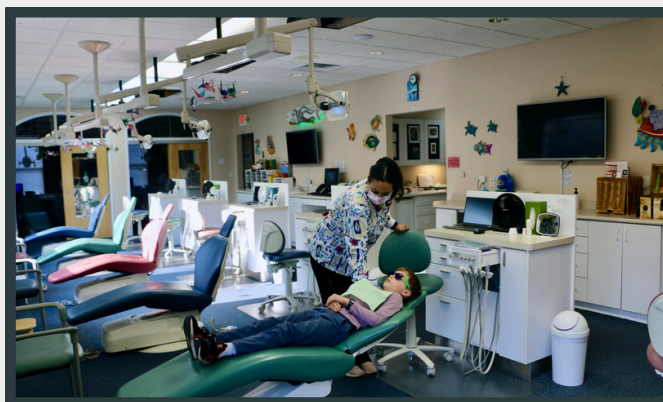


MY APPOINTMENT AT  
**Top Tooth**

They will show my grown up and me where to go next. I will see a lot of special chairs. The person helping me will tell me which color chair to sit in. I might be sitting near other kids who are there for their own appointments.



Then, I will sit in a big chair that can move up and down. Over the chair, they have special TVs where I can watch a movie during my appointment! I will wear a bib to keep my shirt clean and dry. I might wear sunglasses to protect my eyes from the bright light they use to see my teeth.

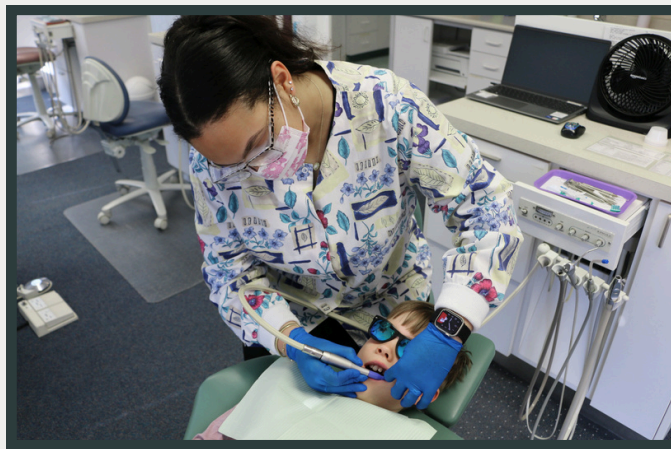


MY APPOINTMENT AT  
**Top Tooth**

A team member will ask me and my grown up some questions about my teeth and health. They will also ask what flavor toothpaste I want to use! The team member will wear a mask, glasses, and gloves to keep everyone clean and safe.



They will look at and clean my teeth. I can open my mouth wide and let them see. They might use a small mirror or tool to count and clean my teeth. I can choose between a spinnny brush or a regular toothbrush like I use at home.



MY APPOINTMENT AT  
**Top Tooth**

While they clean, I can take breaths through my nose, and I can raise my hand if I need a break. They will stop and wait until I am ready again.



I might hear noises from the tools or water spray. And I will feel the tools and sprays on my teeth, gums, and tongue. These are safe tools that help clean my teeth.



MY APPOINTMENT AT  
**Top Tooth**

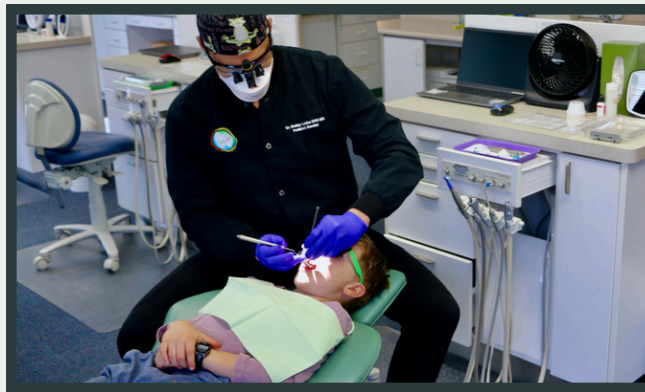
They have a special small straw with suction to help pull the water and toothpaste out of my mouth.



The dentist will come and ask more questions. They might wear special glasses with a light attached to them so they can see my teeth better. The glasses look a little funny! The dentist will also wear a mask, glasses, and gloves to keep everyone clean and safe.



The dentist will look in my mouth and might help clean more. I can raise my hand whenever I need a break. The dentist will talk about how to clean and care for my teeth to keep my mouth healthy. While the dentist looks at my teeth, they will talk about what they see to a helper behind them.



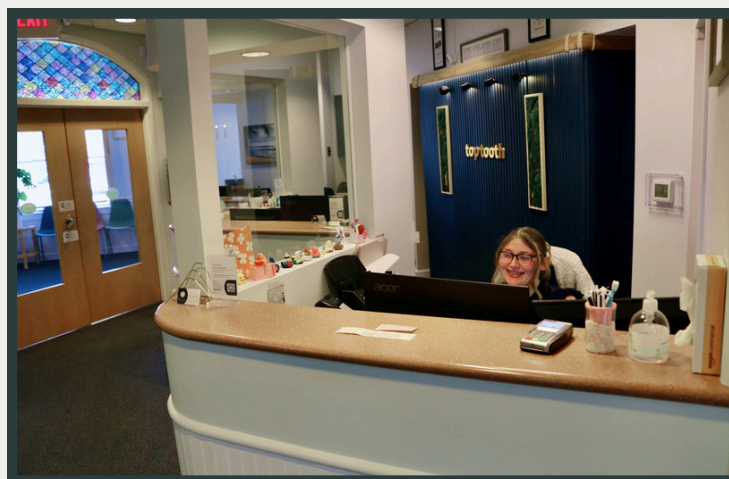
After the cleaning, the dentist or hygienist may brush a fluoride vitamin on my teeth to help make them stronger. There are different flavors I can choose from.



When the dentist is finished, I get to pick a prize from the prize box!



Then my grown up will talk to the people at the desk one last time, and we will leave.



MY APPOINTMENT AT  
**Top Tooth**

I will feel proud that I did my best and helped to take care of my teeth!

