

# A Social Story

## Tom goes to the dentist

“Tom goes to the dentist”, based on the work of Dr Siobhan Doherty Principal Dental Surgeon, HSE, Dublin South West-Kildare West Wicklow Service Area, was developed by Dr Maura Haran, Senior Dental Surgeon – Special Needs and Breda McCarthy Senior Dental Nurse, Waterford Community Services.

# Preparing for the dental visit

Some people with autism find it helpful to prepare for their visit to the dentist. The dental team want to support you in this preparation. Please let us know when you arrive if there are any issues which may make the dental setting challenging e.g. oral sensory issues, sensitivity to noise, light or anything else that you might think might be important.

We include a Social Story in this booklet which you can use to practice going to the dentist. You can go through the steps including:

- Sitting in the dentist's chair
- Keeping their hands on their tummy
- Taking deep breaths in and out and feeling their tummy rise and fall with each breath
- Putting on the sunglasses
- Opening their mouth
- Holding their mouth open
- Counting their teeth

We also enclose a play mirror similar to the mirror which the dentist will use during the dental examination. Practicing with this should make the dental visit less challenging. We suggest you make a game of using this mirror to examine siblings/parents teeth at home in a fun manner. Perhaps you could ask the 'patient' to practice holding his/her mouth open for counts of 5-10 seconds. Please bring this mirror and the toothbrush used at home with you to the dental visit.

## Tom goes to the dentist



**This is a story about Tom going to the dentist.**

**This is Tom and his Mum outside the dental clinic in Waterford.**

**Tom goes into the clinic with his Mum.**

## Tom goes to the dentist



**This is Tom and his Mum in the waiting room.**



**There is a yellow and orange and green desk for drawing pictures while you wait to see the dentist.**

## Tom goes to the dentist



**The dentist meets Tom in the waiting room.**

**She brings Tom and his Mum into the room with her special green chair.**

## Tom goes to the dentist



**The dentist and the dental nurse are very friendly.**

**They are happy to see Tom.**

**They wear gloves on their hands and masks on their faces. This is just to keep the clinic nice and clean.**

## Tom goes to the dentist



**Tom sits in the green chair so the dentist can check his teeth.**

## Tom goes to the dentist



**The dentist turns on a bright light so she can see Tom's teeth.**



**Tom wears sunglasses because the light is bright.**

**He puts his hands on his tummy and takes deep breaths in and out.**



## Tom goes to the dentist



The dentist counts and checks Tom's teeth with a small mirror.



The dentist brushes Tom's teeth.

To



**Tom is now finished.**

**He sits up in the chair.**

**He gives the sunglasses back to  
the dental nurse.**



**The dental nurse gives Tom a  
sticker as a reward for doing so  
well.**

**Tom goes to the dentist**



**The dentist and dental nurse  
say goodbye**



**Tom says goodbye.**

**He leaves the clinic with his  
Mum.**

**Tom goes to the dentist**



**Tom is happy.**

**He likes going to the dentist.**

**He will come back again soon.**