

Pre-Reading Discussion: What other health professionals besides doctors, nurses, and their assistants do you or your family go to for health care?

This passage is about a woman named Donna who is very anxious about her visit to the dentist. Read it and see if you can relate to her experience.

Donna could not sleep. In the morning she had to go to the dentist. She was not looking forward to it. In fact, she was dreading it. She had not been to the dentist in many years. She was afraid it was going to hurt. A lot.

“Ooooooooooh,” she moaned into her pillow.

The next day Donna was a mess. She had hardly slept at all. She almost didn’t go, but she knew she should. She made herself get in the car and drive to the dentist’s office.

“Hello Donna,” said the girl at the desk. “You’ll be seeing Jen first this morning. She’s our dental hygienist. Jen will clean your teeth; then Dr. Lin will see you.”

Donna sat in the big dental chair. It leaned her body back. A bright light shone in her mouth. She tried to relax.

Jen kept talking to her and asking her questions. Donna thought to herself, “It’s hard to chat when you

have your hands in my mouth.” She did her best to be polite.

Donna’s gums were bleeding. Jen told her that she needed to floss every day. She showed Donna how to brush her teeth the right way, and how to floss.

“We need to take a full set of x-rays of your mouth,” said Jen. Donna didn’t like that part. It made her gag.

Dr. Lin looked at the x-rays and at Donna’s mouth. She checked every tooth. “Well Donna,” she said, “you have a few fillings that are very old. We should replace them with new fillings. And your gums are in pretty bad shape, but not too bad. I am going to give you a prescription for a special mouth wash. Use it three times a day. If you start doing that, and you start flossing every day, you will be able to prevent gum disease. You don’t want to get gum disease. It’s a good thing you came in when you did.” Then she gave Donna a new soft tooth brush.

Donna’s teeth felt so clean. As she left the dentist’s office, she smiled at herself in the mirror. “I’m not so stressed out any more. Now I’m going to the drug store to get my prescription filled,” she thought. “And I won’t forget the dental floss.”

Questions for Discussion:

Can you relate to Donna's experience?

Why do you think people procrastinate or put off going to the dentist?

Describe Donna's experience at the dentist. Was it good or bad?

Where would Donna go to fill her prescription?