

## What could make your next dentist appointment less painful?

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Most people sitting in a dentist's chair would rather be just about anywhere else. But what if virtual reality (VR) could make you think you're basically on vacation instead of having someone poke and prod your teeth?

VR has become increasingly available in health-care settings, but a group of UK researchers [looked at](#) whether the content of what patients were seeing made a difference in reported pain. Study participants underwent dental treatment and were divided into three groups: those viewing a virtual reality coastal nature scene; those viewing an urban VR scene; and those with no VR at all.

Results found that participants looking at a relaxing coastal scene reported feeling less pain while they were in the dentists' chair than either of the other groups, suggesting that exposure to nature can improve a patient's health-care experience. The researchers note that "VR technology has patient benefits in situations where real exposure to nature is unfeasible."

Now to find out whether insurance covers virtual reality ...

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