

PATIENT INFORMATION

Conscious Sedation

Why do we use sedation?

Many people are anxious about the prospect of having surgery in the mouth, and think that the only alternative to just having treatment with a local anaesthetic (numbing injection in the gum) is to have a general anaesthetic. Not only does that mean a visit to hospital; but general anaesthetic is not completely safe, contributes to long hospital waiting lists and is unnecessarily expensive to the local health economy. Conscious sedation is a good alternative to this and can be used to help deliver most oral surgery treatments. This allows the majority of patients to relax enough to undergo treatment they feel wouldn't be possible without it.

What types of sedation are there?

There are three generally available types of sedation: oral (**OS**), inhalational (**IS**) and intravenous (**IV**) and in some specialist centres intra-nasal (via the nose) (**IN**). Your referring dentist or surgeon may ask you to complete a simple questionnaire which will help assess your anxiety and guide the choice of the most appropriate sedation for you and the procedure that you need to have.

Oral sedation (OS)

This can be an effective way of managing patient anxiety. The prescribed drugs are usually benzodiazepine ('Valium') types. The pre and post op instructions that are given for intravenous sedation apply. Oral sedation is less predictable. It is difficult to know how successful a particular dose will be and precisely what time it will "kick in" i.e. be at its most effective. For this reason inhalational or intravenous sedation are

most commonly used as their effects are more predictable. Oral sedation may be used the night before appointments in very anxious patients who would otherwise be unable to sleep, with other sedation being used on the day of treatment.

Inhalational sedation (IS)

This involves breathing a mixture of nitrous oxide and oxygen (also known as 'laughing gas') throughout the procedure, via a mask, that fits over the nose. It is very safe and is suitable for co-operative children and adults alike. It is particularly good at reducing the fear and anxiety associated with having injections, and eliminating the tendency to gag/retch when dental instruments are used in the mouth. The sedative has no painkilling effect so a local anaesthetic (a numbing injection into your gums) is still necessary so that the treatment can be carried out. When inhalation sedation is effective patients will describe "being aware" that they were having treatment, "but not caring." The effects wear off very quickly; allowing a swift return to feeling normal and an escort is not always necessary. However, it is not as widely available as other forms of sedation as it requires specialised, expensive equipment to administer it.

Intravenous sedation (IV)

This is used to help relax patients during minor surgical procedures. The sedative (usually a benzodiazepine "Valium" drug) is given by injection into a vein (intravenous) in the arm or the back of a hand. People remain conscious at all times and are able to talk and respond to instructions, but usually remain unaware of the procedure they are having. The sedative has no painkilling effect so a local anaesthetic (a numbing injection into the gum) is still necessary so that the treatment can be carried out.

Intranasal sedation (IN)

This uses the same benzodiazepine type drug that is used routinely in intravenous sedation except it is squirted into the nostril. This is used for extremely needle phobic patients and special care patients where co-operation or understanding is limited. Once effective, sedation is maintained by further intravenous injections if required.

Guidance that must be followed to keep you safe

There are strict rules, which must be adhered to for patient safety as the sedation can remain in the body for anything up to 24 hours afterwards. There may be some variation between clinics, surgeries and hospitals especially around time without food before having sedation. The following instructions are intended as a guide only. **Please follow the specific instructions that your surgeon and their team give you precisely.**

If a responsible adult escort (friend or relative) is required they must stay in the clinic waiting room during your treatment and drive/escort you home afterwards; if not, you cannot have sedation. They will not be allowed to “come later” or “pop out “ whilst your treatment is carried out .

Before your treatment, remember, to tell your oral surgeon of any changes in your medical history, your prescribed medicines and if you have any allergies. Unless specifically told otherwise by your surgeon, you must continue to take, the normal doses, at the usual times, of all your regular prescribed medicines.

On the day of your treatment under oral, intravenous or intranasal sedation

- you can have a light meal up to 2 hours before your treatment
- you can drink fluids right up to the time of treatment unless you have been instructed otherwise
- do not drink any alcohol the day before or on the day of treatment
- treatment and recovery time is usually 1-2 hours
- a responsible adult **must** bring you, drive you home and stay with you for the rest of the day to your appointment
- you cannot bring small children with you to your appointment- your escort must be responsible for you alone

On the day of your treatment under inhalational sedation

- you can eat and drink as normal before the procedure
- it is advisable not to have too heavy a meal if your appointment is close after breakfast or lunch, otherwise you may feel bloated and nauseous
- it is advisable to have a responsible adult bring you to your appointment and accompany you home

After your treatment under oral, intravenous or intranasal Sedation

Afterwards patients generally have little or no memory of the procedure.

- you must not travel home by public transport such as a bus
- you should stay at home resting quietly for 24 hours
- do not drive a car or ride a bicycle, drink alcohol, operate machinery, or use a kettle or stove. Do not do any work or make important decisions for 24 hours, to allow the effects of the sedation to wear off. Your balance, co-ordination and ability to think clearly will all have been affected by the sedative
- you can eat and drink normally as soon as you feel like it once the numbness in your mouth has worn off
- if you have any pain do not hesitate to take the painkillers as advised by your surgeon

After your treatment under inhalational sedation

Patients generally do remember the procedure. Even though the sedative effects pass off very quickly, you are still advised to rest quietly for the remainder of the day. You can travel home by public transport and do most of the activities prohibited after other types of sedation, but driving a car or riding a bike is best left to the following day.

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