

Dental Care using Inhalation Sedation

Information for parents and carers

Many children referred here are anxious about having dental treatment. Our aim is to make your child's dental treatment as comfortable as possible. Inhalation sedation is one way of helping to relieve anxiety so that your child can cope with receiving dental care.

Frequently asked questions:

What is inhalation sedation?

Inhalation sedation has been used in dentistry for almost 40 years. It involves breathing a mixture of two gases, oxygen and nitrous oxide (laughing gas), through a cup that fits over the nose. The mixture of gases is carefully adjusted to give a relaxing and sedative effect. The child is awake and aware of people, surroundings and dental treatment at all times and recovers quickly once the gases are stopped. Inhalation sedation is used as part of a process involving the gradual introduction to various dental procedures. Therefore, with time, your child will become less anxious and more confident and may well be happy to have dental treatment without sedation.

Can any child have inhalation sedation?

Inhalation sedation is a very safe technique for most children. We will thoroughly check that your child is suitable to have Inhalation Sedation before any treatment is given. It is important, therefore, that you let us know of any changes in their medication or health.

Your child must be able to breathe through their nose and so if they had a cold, we may have to postpone this particular type of treatment until the cold is better.

Is Inhalation Sedation safe?

Your child is not at risk. Excessive exposure to nitrous oxide gas over a *month* carries a small risk to the dentist and dental nurse. To reduce this, we use suction equipment to reduce nitrous oxide pollution in the surgery.

Will a dental injection be needed?

Yes. Inhalation sedation does not numb the tooth up. Usually, an injection is needed to make sure your child is comfortable while the tooth is treated. Inhalation Sedation helps your child cope with receiving an injection.

Are there any special instructions?

On the day of treatment:

- Eat and drink normally but avoid a particularly heavy meal. (A light meal such as tea and toast is acceptable)
- The child must always be accompanied by an adult. This must be a parent or guardian for the first sedation appointment. The adult does not need to stay with the child during the whole treatment session if the child is happy for them to wait in the waiting room. Please let the dentist

know if the adult is pregnant.

- Try to avoid bringing other children with you as they can be a distraction to the anxious child.

Will my child be drowsy after treatment?

No. Once the gases are stopped, they will feel back to normal after a few minutes and will not leave the department until then.

How can I help in the treatment of my child?

The service that we offer is time consuming, not only for us, but also for you and your child. It is therefore important that you take steps to reduce further dental disease and anxiety as much as possible. Here are some of the steps that you can take at home to alleviate your child's anxiety and reduce the need for lengthy dental procedures:

Prevent:

- tooth decay by cutting down on the number of sugary snacks and drinks taken between meals.
- gum disease and tooth decay by brushing teeth efficiently with a small amount of fluoride toothpaste twice a day.

Try to:

- avoid 'building-up' your child before each visit with such things as stories and jokes about the dentist from other adults and children.
- be positive about your child's dental treatment when talking to them.
- show your child YOU are not nervous (even if you are!!).

Missed appointments

Missed appointments are expensive to us and mean that another child's treatment is delayed.

If you cannot come to the appointment, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can offer the appointment to someone else (tel: 0131 536 1129).

We hope you and your child enjoy your visits to the Department. If you have any other queries, please speak to the dentist looking after your child's care.

