

# Sedation Options for for Dental Treatment



## **Oral sedatives**

If you are very anxious or nervous about dental treatment, please ask us about pre-medication. This medication is provided to you about 30 minutes before the treatment begins. You should plan to arrive half an hour early and have someone present to drive you home later. There is no additional fee for this service. This can be discussed with your dentist prior to treatment and organised prior to your treatment date.

## **Nitrous Oxide, also known as “A Happy Gas”**

Nitrous Oxide is available to use at your dental appointments so long as you have discussed this with your dentist or treatment coordinator prior to treatment. Happy gas is very effective to help alleviate any stress or anxiety associated with your dental procedure. Happy gas is a gas that is inhaled before and during dental procedures to help reduce pain and induce a happy euphoric feeling. The gas is inhaled through a mask that covers your nose, the nitrous will begin to work within a few minutes. Nitrous helps to ease patient's apprehension and make a dental treatment a more comfortable and pleasant experience.

### **Benefits to nitrous:**

**Very safe** – Nitrous is safe for both adults and children. The nitrous is combined with oxygen during dental procedures, this ensures the nitrous oxide remains safe for the brain. Nitrous is not addictive and non-allergenic however it is not recommended for patients with certain medical conditions such as chronic pulmonary disease.

**Relaxed but aware** – Nitrous can put a patient in a comfortable and relaxed mind set and they are still aware of their surroundings. The patient is able to breathe on their own, move on their own and are still able to communicate to the dentist or hygienist.

**Quick and easy recovery** - The effects of the gas wear off very quickly after the mask is removed. There are no severe side effects and you are able to drive home after your procedure although some patients do prefer to have an escort just for their own peace of mind.

Nitrous oxide is very safe to use for both adults and children and it can even be used for patients who might feel nervous about their dental clean.

The fee for nitrous will depend on how long your procedure lasts for, but we will include it in your treatment plan if you let us know before your treatment commences. The item code we use for claiming Nitrous oxide through your health insurance is 943.

## **IV Sedation (intravenous sedation)**

Intravenous sedation in dentistry is very safe and highly effective and will make your dental visit a relaxing, sleepy and comfortable experience. It is also known as twilight sedation, sleep dentistry or twilight anaesthesia. A combination of intravenous anaesthetic, sedative and pain relieving medications are administered to create a very sleepy and pleasant dream-like state for the whole procedure so that you will be relaxed, comfortable and unaware of your surroundings, while still maintaining the ability to breathe on your own, move and able to respond to direction. The vast majority of people have no memory of the procedure. Memory before and after IV sedation is usually not affected. Patients often comment that the whole procedure has passed in only a few minutes when in reality it may have been several hours.

Intravenous sedation also allows patients to avoid the risks, cost and time involved with having a general anaesthetic. It allows your dentist to care for you at their clinic and is safer, allows you to recover quickly and has minimal side effects compared to undergoing a general anaesthetic.

*Intravenous sedation is beneficial for patients who:*

- Have anxiety or fear/phobia or are nervous about dental procedures or avoid going to the dentist.
- Have had traumatic or negative dental experiences in the past.
- Require complex, multiple, extensive or long dental treatments.
- Dislike needles, drills, pain/discomfort, sights, sounds/noises, tastes or smells associated with their dental procedures.
- Require removal of wisdom teeth, teeth extractions, dental surgery/oral surgery, dental implants, root canal treatment, fillings, periodontal or gum treatments, crowns and bridges, full mouth restorations, bone grafts, All on four (dental implants), emergency procedures, and so forth.
- Have limited time and wish to undertake their dental procedures in one appointment instead of multiple appointments.
- Have difficulty feeling numb with local anaesthetic injections.
- Have a strong gag reflex.
- Find it difficult to keep their mouth open or have jaw problems.
- Are anxious, fearful or nervous about injections/needles or who have a low-pain threshold.

*The benefits to IV sedation include:*

***“Twilight” or “semi-awake” state-*** During IV sedation you are not asleep but rather in a much safer and more comfortable “semi awake” state of reduced anxiety. During IV sedation you are able to respond to verbal instructions, or to a light physical touch. You need no medical assistance to maintain breathing and heart function.

***Fast results*** – IV sedation works quite quickly. Patients can sometimes start to feel the drugs working within a few seconds.

***Deeper levels of sedation are possible*** – Compared to oral sedatives that are administered orally or inhaled, intravenous drugs can cause deeper sedated state. This makes them appropriate for patients that are extremely anxious or need to be sedated for longer periods of time because they require extensive dental work.

***No risk of gag reflex*** - Some patients may have a sensitive gag reflex (this is a topic worth talking to your dentist about) making them unable to tolerate oral or inhaled sedatives. Since IV sedation goes into the blood stream via a vein, the possibility of struggling with overly sensitive gag reflexes is completely bypassed.

The fee for IV sedation will depend on the length of treatment. If you are interested in using this method of sedation let your treatment coordinator know and they will provide further information of costings and Medicare rebates that are available.