



A guide to...

Intravenous sedation for dental procedures

Patient information

How to contact us

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If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 187** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net



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What is sedation?

- Sedation is when drugs are used to make you feel less anxious and more relaxed.
- It will make you drowsy and less aware of what is happening.
- The sedative is given by injection into a vein (intravenous) in the arm or back of the hand.
- You will be awake and will still be able to communicate verbally.
- It is not a general anaesthetic and it does not make you unconscious.
- Following your treatment, you will be required to stay at the clinic/hospital until your clinician is satisfied that you are well enough to be accompanied home.

What are the benefits?

- It reduces anxiety and stress associated with dental treatment.
- You may or may not remember what happens during your treatment.
- It enables the clinician to undertake the procedure with greater ease and safety.
- Intravenous sedation avoids the use of a general anaesthetic and the risks associated with it.

What are the risks?

- The risks are generally minimal
- Your breathing rate may become slow or you may become too drowsy. This is why you will be monitored throughout the procedure and your breathing can be assisted if required.
- Your blood pressure can drop. This can be treated if necessary.
- You may feel sick but this is uncommon.
- An allergic reaction to the sedation drugs is very rare.
- There may be bruising where the cannula was placed or attempted which may last up to several days.
- Sedation can affect your judgement or memory for up to 24 hours.

What are the alternatives?

- The procedure can be performed under local anaesthetic where an injection is given to numb the area which is being treated. You are fully alert for this.
- The alternative is having a general anaesthetic where you are fully unconscious for the procedure.

What to do before the appointment

- Please ensure your last meal is before midnight prior to the day of your procedure. After midnight, you may drink water only until 06:00 (6 AM).
- Please avoid smoking on the day of your procedure.
- You will need to make arrangements for a capable adult to accompany you on the day of the procedure and take you back home. They should stay with you overnight. You will not be treated with sedation if you do not have someone who can look after you afterwards.
- If you have people that you look after, such as a child, you may need to arrange someone else to look after them until the next day.
- If you have any illness, including a cough or cold, please contact the clinic before the appointment as it may need to be postponed.
- Let your clinician know if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Stock up on painkillers such as Ibuprofen and Paracetamol.

- If you have any concerns or queries, please call and speak to one of the waiting list coordinators on 01923 217145/ 436331

What to do on the day of your appointment

- You must attend the department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery by 8.30 am.
- You must be accompanied by a responsible adult, who is not required to stay in the department for the whole morning but must be available for emergency contact by telephone throughout the morning. They must be able to return to accompany you home after the procedure following your recovery.
- Bring all your medication (including inhalers) with you.
- Please ensure you have allowed sufficient time for parking.
- Most patients are usually sent home by 12.30 pm.

What to expect before your treatment

- You will be seen by a nurse who will ask you some screening questions and take some observations, for example your heart rate and blood pressure.
- Females of pre-menopausal age will be asked to provide a urine sample for a pregnancy test. You will be provided with a specimen pot.
- You will be given information on what your procedure involves beforehand by the dental surgeon.
- The anaesthetist who will be giving you sedation will see you prior to the procedure to go through your medical history and explain sedation to you.
- There are usually several patients booked on the list. After all the patients have been assessed, the doctors will decide the order of the operating list. This will depend on the medical history of all the patients.

How will sedation be given on the day?

- A cannula (drip) will be placed in the back of your hand or arm through which sedation medications can be given. You will also have monitoring equipment placed to check your blood pressure, oxygen levels and heart rhythm.
- More sedation can be given as needed throughout the procedure.
- The clinician giving you sedation will be talking to you throughout the procedure to make sure you are comfortable.
- You will usually have oxygen to breathe through a plastic tube sitting in your nose or through a face mask.
- After the procedure, you will be observed and monitored in a recovery area until you are ready to be discharged home.

What sedation feels like?

- You will remain conscious throughout the procedure.
- Typically, you will have a feeling of being more relaxed when sedation is given.
- You may have temporary loss of memory during the time sedation was given.
- You may feel unsteady on your feet or have worsened coordination for some time after sedation is given.
- Your ability to think clearly or make judgements may be affected for the next 24 hours.

When can I go home?

- You should be ready to go home within two hours of the end of the procedure. Most of our patients are usually ready for discharge by 12.30 pm.
- You will be assessed to make sure it is safe for you to go home.
- Your clinician will provide information and instructions regarding post-operative care.

Instructions for afterwards

- You should go home accompanied by a capable adult who can look after you and stay with you overnight.
- You should not return to work, drive, cook, operate any machinery, perform skilled tasks or look after dependants for 24 hours.
- You should not take any alcohol or sleeping tablets for 24 hours after the procedure.
- Your ability to make decisions may be affected for up to 24 hours so you should avoid making any important decisions during this time, including signing legal documents.
- In case you feel unwell at home, please contact the department of Oral and Maxillofacial surgery on 01923 244 366.

During out of hours, you may need to contact your GP or attend the Emergency Department.