

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS WHO WILL BE RECEIVING NITROUS OXIDE/OXYGEN SEDATION

Nitrous oxide (or laughing gas) is a colorless and virtually odorless gas with a faint, sweet smell. It is an effective agent for lessening pain and anxiety. It generally works well in children who have some degree of cooperation. Most children are enthusiastic about the administration of nitrous oxide/oxygen; they often report feeling happy or feel like they are on a “space-ride”. For some patients, however, the feeling of “losing control” may be troubling; claustrophobic patients may find the nasal hood confining and unpleasant.

Nitrous oxide takes effect and wears off rapidly (2-3 minutes). Your child will have minimal impairment of any reflexes. Since the gas effects wear off almost immediately after it is turned off, your child can go home as soon as he/she is ready.

Acute and chronic adverse effects to nitrous oxide are rare. The most common side effects are nausea and vomiting. These are usually prevented by following the pre-operative instructions given to you prior to the appointment.

The objectives of nitrous oxide/oxygen sedation are:

1. To reduce or eliminate pain and/or anxiety;
2. To reduce the unpleasantness associated with dental treatment;
3. To enhance communication and patient cooperation;
4. To increase tolerance for longer appointments;
5. To reduce gagging.

Before your child’s appointment

1. Your child should not have anything to eat 2 hours before his/her appointment. The meal should be light and easily digestible. Avoid foods such as rice or pasta, and fatty foods.
2. Contact us prior to the appointment if there has been a change to your child’s general health (such as a stuffy nose, cough, cold, flu, fever, etc).
3. Please ensure that your child does not wear any nail polish as it may interfere with the monitoring equipment. Comfortable, short-sleeve clothing should be worn. This provides the required access for the placement of the blood pressure cuff. Turtle necks should be avoided.

Following your child’s appointment

ACTIVITY

- Most children can resume normal activity after having nitrous oxide/oxygen sedation.
- If your child feels dizzy after the sedation, watch them closely and have them relax at home if necessary.

DIET

- You will be notified if local anesthetic has been used during the procedure. It usually takes 2-3 hours to completely wear off. Make sure you monitor your child closely to avoid any soft tissue trauma.
- After the numbing wears off, your child can eat and drink normally.

PAIN

- If local anesthetic was used during the procedure, he/she should not experience any pain or discomfort until the numbing wears off.
- If he/she complains of pain, regular strength children’s Tylenol is usually sufficient.