

Conscious Sedation (Oral Surgery and Maxillofacial Surgery)

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What is conscious sedation?

Conscious sedation involves using medication to reduce anxiety before your surgery.

What are the benefits?

Many people are anxious about having surgery in the mouth. When combined with local anaesthetic, conscious sedation is a good alternative to a general anaesthetic.

Oral sedation

Oral (by mouth) sedation is usually a medication called a benzodiazepine and is given as a tablet at bedtime the day before surgery.

It is difficult to predict when oral sedation will take effect, and how effective a dose will be. You may need other forms of sedation on the day of the treatment.

Most people have little or no memory of the procedure. The effects of oral sedation can take up to 2 hours to wear off.

Intravenous sedation (IV)

This is used to help people relax during minor surgical procedures. It is usually a benzodiazepine given as an injection into a vein in the arm or the back of a hand. You will be conscious at all times and be able to speak and respond to instructions, but you will not usually be aware of the procedure you are having. The effects of intravenous sedation can take up to an hour to wear off.

Intranasal sedation (IN)

This is usually a benzodiazepine that is squirted into the nostril. Once intranasal sedation starts working, you are kept sedated using intravenous injections if needed.

Intranasal sedation is used for people who prefer to avoid needles or whose co-operation or understanding is limited.

Most people have little or no memory of the procedure. The effects of intranasal sedation can take up to an hour to wear off.

Inhalational sedation

This involves breathing a mixture of nitrous oxide and oxygen (also known as 'laughing gas') through a mask throughout the procedure. It reduces fear and anxiety associated with injections and the tendency to gag or retch when dental instruments are used in the mouth.

Once inhalational sedation takes effect, most people are aware they are having treatment but feel as though it does not bother them.

The effects are short-lived, so you should recover quickly after your procedure.

Summary

Anxiety before a procedure in the mouth is common. Conscious sedation before and during sedation to reduce anxiety is usually safe and effective.

[Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.](#)

[Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.](#)

[This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.](#)

Acknowledgements

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