

Intravenous sedation for dental / surgical treatment

This leaflet aims to improve understanding of sedation for treatment of your condition and contains answers to many commonly asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or would like further explanation please ask.

What is intravenous sedation?

Intravenous sedation is used to help people who are very anxious cope with dental treatment. It is also useful if you are to have a surgical procedure performed.

How is intravenous sedation given?

“Intravenous” (IV) means that the drug is given through a vein. An extremely thin needle is placed into a vein close to the surface of the skin, either into the back of the hand or the arm. The needle is then removed, leaving a soft plastic tube called a cannula in place. The sedation drug is given through this plastic tube.

Throughout the procedure, your pulse and oxygen levels are measured using a “pulse oximeter”. This clips onto a finger and measures pulse and oxygen saturation.

What does it feel like? Will I be asleep?

Intravenous sedation **does not** make you go to sleep. You will feel drowsy and relaxed and will also be able to understand and respond to requests from your dentist. Time will appear to pass very quickly and most people remember very little of the treatment afterwards. You may feel as if you have been to sleep.

You will still have a local anaesthetic (an injection in the mouth to numb your tooth to be treated), but this will not be given until you are sedated.

What drugs are used?

These are anti-anxiety sedative drugs. In the UK, a benzodiazepine (midazolam) is almost always the only drug used for IV sedation for dental procedures.

Is it safe?

As you are not unconscious IV sedation is extremely safe. The potential risks of having a general anaesthetic are avoided.

Before IV sedation:

1. You must bring a responsible adult with you who must be present at the beginning of the appointment. Children must not be brought to the appointment. This escort is required for your safe journey home.
2. You should **not** starve yourself. A light meal (for example tea and toast) is advisable together with small non-alcoholic drinks.
3. You must take your routine medicines at the usual time. Bring inhalers with you.
4. You should wear flat shoes and comfortable clothing that does not constrict your breathing or the ability to roll up your sleeves.
5. You must not drink any alcohol for 24 hours before your appointment.
6. You must not wear false nails, nail varnish or foundation make-up.
7. You must phone us as soon as possible if there is a change in your health or you develop a cough, cold or chest problems just before your appointment.

After IV sedation:

1. You must travel home with your escort by car or taxi.
2. You must stay resting quietly at home for the rest of the day with a responsible adult present.
3. You must not drive or go on the road for at least 24 hours after your sedation.
4. You must not use any equipment that may harm you, for example kettles, cookers, knives, power tools for at least 24 hours afterwards.
5. You must not sign any legal or business document until the following day.
6. You must not drink alcohol for 24 hours after sedation.

Contact us

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Further information

www.dentalhealth.org.uk/

Visit the Trust website at www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, July 2020
Review due: July 2022