Royal Cornwall Hospitals
NHS Trust

Conscious sedation

Information for oral surgery patients









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What is conscious sedation?

One of our clinical team has recommended that you have your minor procedure with the help of sedation. Sedation is when medications are used to make you feel less anxious and more relaxed. It can make you drowsy, less aware of what is happening and with few memories of what has happened to you during your treatment. It does not make you unconscious, and you should be able to respond to clinician requests and questions.

How can I prepare ahead of appointment day?

The effects of sedation mean that some advance planning is needed.

- You will need an escort who is a responsible adult that can look after you unaided. The escort will need to bring you to hospital, remain within the hospital grounds during treatment and take you straight home directly from our department by car or taxi rather than public transport.
- A responsible adult will also need to stay with you, for the rest of the day as a minimum, but overnight if you are still experiencing the effects of the sedation.
- Please ensure you have some suitable simple painkillers available at home, for example paracetamol.
- Usually, your regularly prescribed medications should be taken on the day of the appointment as normal but there are some exceptions, notably medication for diabetes and blood-thinning medications. If you are unsure, please contact us before your appointment day to check whether you should take them or not.
- We recommend that you arrange to have time off work on the day of the procedure and the following day as a minimum.
- You should not be in a position of responsibility for young children or machinery for 24 hours following the procedure and we strongly advise you avoid making important decisions or using social media during that period.

How do I prepare on the day of my appointment?

- It is important that you have an **empty stomach** for your procedure, as this will minimise risks of vomiting. You will be given specific advice about fasting in our leaflet called 'Fasting before your operation'.
- Wear something comfortable and loose-fitting, particularly on your arms, where we will place our patient monitoring equipment.
- If you usually take inhalers, please bring them with you.
- If you are not feeling well, please phone the department for advice before you set off. Please do not attend the department without checking as you may be turned away.

What will happen at my appointment?

One of the nursing team will complete a pre-procedure safety checklist with you to ensure that we have all the information we need. This checklist will include when you last ate or drank, if you have any allergies, and if you could be pregnant. A urine test can be performed to check for pregnancy, so it is advisable not to use the hospital toilet facilities before the nurse has seen you in case this test is required. The nurse will record your blood pressure, pulse, temperature, and oxygen levels.

The operating surgeon will talk through the intended surgical procedure and the sedation process with you, explaining any risks and answering any questions. If you are happy to proceed with the agreed procedure with the recommended sedation you will be asked to sign a consent form.

How will I be sedated?

When comfortable in the dental chair, a cannula (thin flexible tube) will be placed into a vein in your arm or hand. The sedation medication will be given into your vein using this cannula. The cannula will remain in position throughout the procedure and while you are recovering with us. The nursing staff will stay with you throughout the procedure and monitor you closely.

What drugs are used and what does sedation feel like?

The sedation normally used in our clinic is midazolam. It is a type of anti-anxiety drug. Unlike a general anaesthetic, intravenous sedation does not make you go to sleep and has fewer side effects. The amount of sedation that you are given will be adjusted to your individual needs. You will feel drowsy and relaxed but will also be able to understand and respond to requests by the surgeon. Once the sedation is working the surgeon will start the procedure. If needed they will also give local anaesthetic medication to numb the area they are treating.

How will I feel afterwards?

Following sedation, your recovery is usually much quicker than with a general anaesthetic, but you may still feel unsteady on your feet for several hours afterwards. You may experience some forgetfulness and your ability to think clearly and make decisions may be affected for the next 24 hours.

As the effects of sedation can stay with you for up to 24 hours, we advise you not to drive or ride a bicycle or motorbike for 24 hours after your procedure.

What happens afterwards?

Following your procedure, we will invite your escort to the clinical room and discuss aftercare guidance including painkiller advice, how to prevent or deal with any bleeding, what to eat, and mouth/wound care. We will also discuss any follow up appointments that you need, which will depend on your individual case.

We will give you written aftercare advice about your procedure to take home. This leaflet includes telephone numbers for who to contact in an emergency or if you need advice. Once you are safe and feel well enough to go home, we will remove your cannula and give you any dressing, swabs, or medications that are needed.

Contact us

If you have any questions, queries or concerns, please call the Oral Surgery department on:

01872 253980 (opening hours are 08:00 – 17:00 hrs Monday to Friday)

For emergencies outside of these hours please contact the hospital switchboard on 01872 25000 and ask for the on-call SHO for Oral Surgery.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

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