

# Information for Parents / Guardians on Inhalation Sedation

One of the options for children having dental treatment is Inhalation Sedation. This may be discussed at your assessment appointment.

## What is Inhalation Conscious Sedation?

Inhalation sedation, often called **laughing gas**, is a safe and effective method used in dentistry to help children feel calm and relaxed during dental treatment. It involves inhaling of a mixture of nitrous oxide and oxygen.

This type of sedation involves your child being awake and aware of treatment taking place. This is not a General Anaesthetic.

## How Does Inhalation Sedation Work?

- **Simple and Non-invasive:** Your child will breathe in a mixture of nitrous oxide and oxygen through a small mask placed over their nose.
- **Relaxing Effect:** The gas works quickly to calm your child, while still being awake.
- **Adjustable Levels:** The amount of gas can be adjusted throughout the procedure to ensure your child stays comfortable.

## Benefits of Inhalation Sedation

- **Inhalation sedation** is well-tolerated by children with minimal side effects.
- **Quick Onset:** The sedation works quickly to reduce anxiety.
- **Reduces Anxiety:** Helps children who are anxious or fearful about dental visits feel more at ease.
- **Quick Recovery:** Effects wear off quickly, allowing normal activities after the procedure.

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## What Can You Expect During the Procedure?

- **Preparation:** The dentist will explain the process in a child-friendly way.
- **Breathing in the Gas:** Your child will be asked to breathe normally through their nose, and they will feel relaxed within a few minutes.
- **Dental Treatment:** While your child remains relaxed, the dentist will carry out the necessary dental treatment.
- **Local anaesthetic:** In addition to happy air we may also need to use a local anaesthetic injection to numb the area. We find with most children is not helpful to use terms like 'needle' and we often describe it as a 'cold spray', an 'ice pop' or 'sleepy juice'.
- **Reversing Sedation:** At the end, oxygen is given to help your child return to normal.

## Risks and Considerations of Inhalation Sedation

While inhalation sedation is generally safe and effective, there are some important factors to consider:

- **Age and Development:** Inhalation Sedation is best for children who are old enough to understand the process and can breathe through their nose. If the child is too young or unable to cope with the sedation, it could worsen dental anxiety.
- **Not for Every Child:** While most children tolerate inhalation sedation well, some may feel uneasy, claustrophobic, or uncomfortable wearing the mask. If the child's anxiety worsens or they cannot relax enough for the procedure, the sedation may be stopped.
- **Alternative Options:** If a child is not responding well to inhalation sedation or the dental treatment is too complex, General Anaesthesia (GA) may be more appropriate. General anaesthesia puts the child into a deep sleep, ensuring they do not experience any distress during the treatment.
- **Side Effects:** Some children may experience mild side effects such as dizziness, feeling sick, or headaches after the procedure. These usually resolve quickly.
- **Underlying Health Conditions:** Children with certain health conditions, such as breathing problems, may not be suitable for inhalation sedation. The dentist will assess your child's medical history at the assessment appointment.

## Is Inhalation Sedation Safe for My Child?

Inhalation sedation is very safe for most children. The dentist will assess your child's general health and complexity of dental treatment required. If your child is too young, too anxious, or if the treatment is too complex, other options such as General Anaesthesia may be more suitable.



If you keep cancelling appointments at short notice then we are likely to request a further assessment (non-treatment) visit.

We will always try to be helpful but we do need your cooperation.

## Things to know before the sedation appointment

- **Fasting:** Not required - have a light meal before the sedation appointment.
- **Talk to your child:** Explain the mask and how it works.
- **Clothing:** Have your child wear comfortable clothes.
- **Comfort items:** Bring a small toy, headphone or weighted blanket if needed.
- **Recovery Time:** Most children recover quickly but should have quiet time for a couple of hours.
- **Diet:** There are usually no dietary restrictions after sedation depending on the dental treatment carried out. Discuss this with the dentist prior to the sedation appointment.

Watch **A Guide to Inhalation Sedation** video with your child:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoZEO68rxYw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoZEO68rxYw)  
or scan the QR code



## Contact us:

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