

We would like to give you some information about all of the conscious sedation techniques available at Queensway Dental Clinic so that you are confident about giving us your permission (informed consent) to treat yourself or your child.

Treatment without local anaesthetic (numbing):

Useful for check-ups, photographs, x-rays, scale and polish or preventative varnish application to teeth (procedures where there is no pain associated)

Standard Conscious Sedation Techniques:

Inhalation "Happy Air" Conscious Sedation:

Nitrous oxide is mixed with oxygen to create a pleasant sedative air which can be breathed in through the nose via a small soft nose hood. This is a similar technique to "gas and air" used for women during labour. This is an extremely safe technique which reduces the sensations of pain and anxiety, and creates a semi-hypnotic state for patients which makes them feel happy and comfortable. Patients will usually be aware of everything which is going on around them during the procedure but are more relaxed. Although patients are sedated during the procedure the recovery is fast with most patients feeling totally awake and in control within fifteen minutes after stopping the inhalation procedure. Therefore adult patients may not need an escort to accompany them.

This technique is suitable for most adults and children with mild anxiety where only a small number of teeth need filling or extracting, or where the teeth to be treated are in the same area of the mouth. It may also be more suited to patients with needle phobias or patients with more complex general medical problems who may not be appropriate for intravenous conscious sedation.

Intravenous Conscious Sedation:

This is the most commonly used technique for patients aged over sixteen years, who are generally fit and well. It is usually delivered via a small plastic tube in the back of the hand or arm. A sedative medication called midazolam is given through this tube and the amount required is subject to each patient's response. For patients who are anxious about needles we sometimes advise using inhalation conscious sedation to relax them and provide some pain relief prior to the injection and can also use emla cream to numb the back of the hand in advance.

Commonly patients receiving intravenous conscious sedation are more deeply sedated compared with inhalation conscious sedation. Most patients usually have significant memory loss of the procedure following intravenous conscious sedation, but some patients may remember small details of the procedure and a very small minority of patients may have good memory of the events during the procedure. Unfortunately, we are unable to guarantee the level of amnesia as all patients respond differently to the medication.

This technique is ideal for highly anxious patients, prolonged or more invasive procedures and procedures involving the treatment of multiple teeth at multiple sites. Patients require a suitable escort until the following morning after treatment and need to be starved for at least two hours prior to their appointment (unless informed otherwise by their dentist or anaesthetist).

Alternative Conscious Sedation Techniques:

Some children, and a few adults, may be severely anxious and hence, unable to cope with dental treatment with the standard conscious sedation techniques mentioned earlier. At Queensway Dental Clinic we always try to match the simplest conscious sedation technique to achieve the successful completion of the proposed dental treatment. To reduce the numbers of patients needing to be referred to hospital for a general anaesthetic, Queensway has developed and researched some alternative conscious sedation techniques that have been shown to be safe and effective.

Combination Conscious Sedation Techniques:

Queensway is fortunate to have a dedicated sedation team who have the training, experience and facilities to deliver our alternative techniques. These techniques involve using inhalation conscious sedation techniques involving nitrous oxide, sevoflurane and oxygen, with or without intravenous conscious sedation using midazolam, and a painkiller called fentanyl. Very occasionally we use an alternative sedative called propofol. This mixture of medications is still used to create a state of conscious sedation where patients are awake, however the level of sedation, reduction in pain, reduction of anxiety and depth of amnesia is more profound. However, it is important to note that even during this technique, patients will not be asleep.

These techniques allows the most highly anxious patients to be treated with a high success rate, they are especially useful for anxious children requiring multiple teeth to be treated. As with intravenous conscious sedation, patients require a suitable escort for until the following morning after treatment and need to be starved for at least six hours prior to their appointment (unless informed otherwise by their dentist or anaesthetist). When using these techniques, the feeling of recovering from the effects of the sedation and the sensation of the mouth being numb can often seem a little distressing, especially for children. Therefore, patients sometimes feel quite emotional and can get upset whilst in recovery. It is important that patients' escorts are reassuring and help to provide positive feedback regarding the patient's treatment and experience.

Oral Conscious Sedation:

Sometimes young patients who are uncontrollably anxious or unco-operative may benefit more support from us by having a small drink of medication before setting foot in the dental room. The aim of this is to reduce their anxiety in advance so that they are more willing to co-operate in accepting the nose hood for inhalation conscious sedation or the intravenous cannula for intravenous conscious sedation.

Referral for a General Anaesthetic in a Hospital Setting:

The experienced team at Queensway always puts patients' best interests first. A small number of patients are unsuitable for any of the above techniques discussed and would be more suitably managed within a hospital environment. The reasons for this would be discussed with you at your assessment appointment or in the event of our conscious sedation techniques being unsuccessful.

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Advice To Patients

Conscious Sedation Techniques

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In the hospital setting some patients may be able to have very basic dentistry done when completely unconscious under a general anaesthetic. This is not suitable for the majority of patients and in most cases it is advisable to try a conscious sedation technique prior to referral for a general anaesthetic.

Please note that at queensway dental clinic we are unable to provide dental treatment under general anaesthetic (we do not put patients to sleep).

Remember - we are here to help and advise you. If there is anything in this information you are unsure of and would like some clarification then please ask a member of our team and we will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have.