

Informed consent for nitrous oxide sedation

Patient name _____ Date _____

Introduction

Nitrous oxide is a colorless, slightly sweet gas that is used during dental treatment for relaxation and anxiety relief. When inhaled, it can induce feelings of euphoria and sedation. It also can produce sensations of drowsiness, warmth and tingling in the hands, feet and/or about the mouth. In the dental setting, it will not induce unconsciousness. You will be able to swallow, talk and cough as needed.

Contraindications

Please let us know if you have any of the following medical conditions, because we may not be able to safely use nitrous oxide: congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), chronic bronchitis, emphysema, chronic asthma, bronchiectasis, pregnancy, hepatitis B or C, tuberculosis, macrocytic anemia, immune diseases, respiratory diseases, middle ear infections, or a history of substance abuse. Also, if you suffer from claustrophobia, you may choose not to use nitrous oxide.

Preoperative guidelines

Nitrous oxide is administered through a nasal mask. You must be able to breathe through the nose (blocked nasal passages, colds, etc., defeat the idea of using nitrous oxide for relaxation). Avoid eating at least four hours prior to the dental appointment. Avoid caffeinated products before coming in for treatment. Nitrous oxide can cause “stomach butterflies” (nausea), which may result in vomiting. On the day of your appointment, do not take any antidepressants (unless your dentist is aware of them) or other sedatives unless prescribed by your dentist.

Instructions during nitrous oxide use

Your mask must remain firmly in place during the entire period. Do not breathe through your mouth. Breathe through the nose only. Notify the doctor if you are experiencing difficulty in breathing through your nose. No talking is allowed while nitrous oxide is being used. Talking blows nitrous oxide into the room, lessening the desired effect for you, and exposing the dental staff to the nitrous effects.

Postoperative guidelines

Recovery from nitrous oxide sedation is rapid. The gas will be flushed from your system with oxygen. If you feel dizzy after the sedation, remain seated and the sensation should pass in a few minutes. Do not leave the office until your head feels clear, and you are able to function (i.e., walk and drive) safely.

Risks of nitrous oxide

You may feel nauseated, dizzy, drowsy or claustrophobic during and after sedation.

Alternatives to nitrous oxide

You may choose not to use nitrous oxide and complete your dental treatment without any treatment for anxiety. You may be referred to a specialist for deeper sedation if you feel you require it. If your dentist feels this is an option for you, you may choose to take an oral sedative or a pill that will relieve your anxiety. This consent is valid for a period of twelve (12) months. I may withdraw my consent at any time.

I understand the previous statements and have had my questions answered.

_____ Date _____
Patient signature/legally authorized representative

_____ Relationship _____
Printed name if signed on behalf of the patient

_____ Date _____
Doctor signature