



# Nitrous Oxide Sedation

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**Nitrous Oxide Gas, often referred to as laughing gas, is an effective anesthetic drug that has many benefits for fearful patients seeking dental treatment.**

## Benefits

- Nitrous oxide is safe, the patient receives 20-70% nitrous oxide, with no less than 30% oxygen
- The patient is able to breathe on their own and remain in control of all bodily functions.
- It works rapidly as it reaches the brain within 20 seconds. In as few as 2-3 minutes its relaxation and pain killing properties develop.
- The depth of sedation can be altered at any time to increase or decrease sedation
- The patient may experience mild amnesia and may fall asleep not remembering all of what happened during their appointment.
- There is no after effect such as a "hangover".
- Inhalation sedation is very effective in minimizing gagging.
- Unlike IV sedation or general anesthesia, the patient can almost always leave the office by themselves, without an escort.
- It is highly recommended for apprehensive patients who have medical problems such as angina pectoris,

persons who have had a heart attack, or persons with high blood pressure, asthma or epilepsy.

## Reasons to not use Nitrous Oxide

Nitrous oxide has few side effects. High doses can cause nausea and vomiting in some patients, and about 10% of patients do not benefit from it. Patients that are claustrophobic or have blocked nasal passages cannot use nitrous oxide effectively. You may not want to use it if you have emphysema, exotic chest problems, M.S., a cold or other difficulties with breathing.

You may want to ask the dentist for a "5 minute trial" to see how you feel with this type of sedation method before proceeding.

## How it is administered?

The gas is administered with a comfortable mask placed over the nose, and you are instructed to breathe in and out through your nose. You begin to feel the effects of sedation in anywhere from 30 seconds to three or four minutes.

What you will experience when receiving laughing gas include an initial feeling of lightheadedness, which gradually leads to an all-over feeling of warmth. Many persons mention a comfortable "vibrating" or "humming" sensation. It is common to feel one's fingertips and hands become "numb."

This same sensation may develop in the mouth - a benefit to you during the treatment. Some patients will mention that their arms and legs feel "very light." Interestingly, other patients will say that their arms and legs feel "so heavy I can't even move them."

If either of these occurs to the patient, it is perfectly normal.

After the gas is adjusted to the appropriate dose, and you are relaxed and sedated, the dentist can comfortably give the injection (if needed) and then proceed with dental treatment. After the treatment is completed, pure oxygen is given to you to breathe for about five minutes, and all the effects of sedation are usually reversed.

Most dentists permit the fully-recovered patient to leave the dental office unescorted and to resume their normal activities. In some situations where a patient recovers more slowly, they might be required to have an escort (friend or relative) drive them home.

## Instructions prior to your appointment:

- Please inform us of any change to your health and/or medical condition.
- Tell us about any respiratory condition that makes breathing through the nose difficult for you. It may limit the effectiveness of the nitrous oxide/oxygen.
- Let us know if you are taking any medication on the day of the appointment.
- Please dress in loose fitting, comfortable clothing.
- Please make sure that you go to the bathroom immediately prior to arriving at the office.
- You should not have solid food for at least 4 hours prior to the sedation appointment and only clear liquids for up to 2 hours before the appointment.

**Please call our office at 476-5181 for any questions or concerns that you might have.**