

IV Sedation

Intravenous sedation, or IV sedation, is sometimes recommended in the dental office in order to allow treatment to be completed more quickly and comfortably. Sedation may be recommended if your child:

- 1) Is very young,
- 2) Needs extensive dental treatment,
- 3) Is very anxious and fearful, and/or
- 4) Has special needs.

In these situations, IV sedation offers a less traumatic experience for your child and helps them to maintain a positive attitude towards their oral health. Your child will be "asleep" while the dentist is able to complete all of the necessary dental procedures in one visit. (Please note, however, that any space maintainers that need to be made in a lab will need to be seated during a separate visit).

Are there other options to IV sedation?

Alternative behavior management methods include physical restraint alone, nitrous oxide/oxygen analgesia, oral sedative medications, or deferment of the treatment until your child is old enough to tolerate regular care. Depending on your child's behavior or situation, limitations to these approaches can include:

- 1) compromises in the quality of dental care,
- 2) decreased patient comfort and increased patient anxiety towards dental treatment, and/or
- 3) decreased physical safety for your child.

How is the Sedation Performed?

When you arrive at our office on the day of the appointment, please be prepared to relax in our reception area while your child's dental treatment is being completed. During the sedation, we may use any or all of the following to keep your child safe and comfortable:

- 1) Nitrous oxide ("Happy Air") to provide additional sedation
- 2) Local anesthetic to make the teeth numb

A board certified anesthesiologist will administer and monitor the sedation procedure in the dental office while the pediatric dentist is performing the dental treatment. Throughout the sedation, your child will be monitored with hospital operating room technology in accordance with strict guidelines set forth by the California State Dental Board (including EKG, pulse oximeter, blood pressure monitor, and continuous delivery of oxygen).

Safety

The safety record of in-office anesthesia administered by an independent dentist anesthesiologist is unsurpassed by any other system of anesthesia delivery. Nevertheless, there are some potential complications that need mentioning. These include but are not limited to: nausea and vomiting (generally after the child wakes up and begins to move about), venous irritation at the site of the IV catheter, delayed recovery (especially after prolonged procedures), reflexive closure of the vocal cords (i.e., "laryngospasm," treated with suctioning, oxygen, and, occasionally, a muscle relaxant), respiratory depression, allergic reaction, and even brain damage, stroke, loss of function, or death. (Please keep in mind, however, that these latter risks occur as rarely as they are serious.)

Pre-operative Sedation Instructions

1) **Fasting:** Your child needs to arrive at the office on an empty stomach. The anesthesiologist will call you a day or two before the appointment to review specific instructions on when your child may last eat or drink prior to the appointment. Often, the anesthesiologist will instruct you not to allow your child to eat or drink anything during the eight hours prior to his/her appointment (or after midnight.)

2) **Medications:** If your child requires specific medications on a daily basis, they should be taken only with a small sip of water unless otherwise directed. Be sure to inform both Dr. Rebecca Lee Pair and the anesthesiologist of any medications your child may be on. If you have any questions regarding the medications used during the sedation, please address these concerns to the anesthesiologist when he/she contacts you before your appointment.

3) **Illness:** Please call the office if your child has had any recent illnesses involving respiratory congestion or fever (including sneezing, stuffy or runny nose, or cough), as we may advise postponing the appointment until these symptoms have passed. While the risk of respiratory or cardiac problems during sedation is extremely low, it is important that your child is healthy during the appointment in order to keep these risks to a minimum.

4) **Clothing:** Your child should wear a short-sleeved shirt and loose clothes for the appointment. Because one complication of anesthesia can be urination during or after a prolonged procedure, young children should wear a diaper or training pants. A change of clothing and a blanket is advised for all children.

5) **Transportation and Accompaniment:** Your child will need assistance to the car after the recovery period. Please bring an adult strong enough to carry your child. Further, it is advised that you arrange private transportation with a child car seat for your drive home. It is helpful to have two responsible persons accompany the child to his appointment, one to sit with the patient on the way home and the other to drive the car. In order to provide your child with your undivided attention, small siblings should not be brought along to the appointment.

6) **Arrival:** Please be on time for your appointment. The anesthesiologist is an independent contractor who you are paying by the hour. Further, sedation appointments are generally scheduled once a month. Another young child who has also been given fasting instructions may be waiting to start after your child's treatment is completed, and your tardiness will delay his/her treatment.

7) **Explanations for your child:** It is not necessary to mentally "prepare" your child for his sedation appointment, as this may only increase his anxiety regarding the appointment. Simply explaining that you are returning to the office so that the dentist may look at his teeth again or "brush away the cavity bugs" may be sufficient. Remember, one advantage of IV sedation is that your child will most likely not remember his/her dental treatment, thereby minimizing any potential traumatic dental experiences.

Instructions for Home Care After the Appointment

- You should be able to take your child home after he/she has been sufficiently monitored and excused by the anesthesiologist. Usually, this is within one hour after the completion of the dental treatment. Be prepared to spend the rest of the day at home with your child.
- On returning home, let your child nap if on a firm mattress without a pillow. This will allow the initial numbness and discomfort to wear off.
- Clear liquids and then soft foods should be offered in moderation. Chewing should be avoided until the local anesthetic has worn off. Foods high in fat content are not recommended immediately after the procedure.
- Before the procedure is over, the anesthesiologist most often administers a high-strength pain reliever that will last for about six hours. Over the counter Tylenol or Motrin may be taken after the first six hours for discomfort.
- Flushing or redness may occur as a side effect of the medications used. If this should occur, cool your child by removing extra clothing or blankets, offering cool drinks or popsicles, placing a wet towel on his/her forehead, and turning on the air conditioner or fan.
- Although your child may have sensitivity around any new crowns or extraction sites, oral hygiene is still important. The cleaner his/her mouth is, the sooner the gums will heal. Brush and floss!
- A spike in temperature (under 101 F) may occur and can be treated with children's Tylenol. Nausea and vomiting may occur. Call the dentist or anesthesiologist if there is persistent vomiting (beyond 4 hours), fever greater than 101 F, excessive bleeding (severe bleeding for greater than 30 minutes), or if you have any other concerns.

Financial Arrangements

While we will gladly preauthorize for the estimated dental services, full payment of your portion of the dental services is expected at the time of the appointment. Please realize that anesthesia services are not a covered benefit of dental insurances, and you must pay the anesthesiologist directly in-full on the day of the appointment. A non-refundable deposit of \$500 is required to reserve a treatment appointment.

Cancellation Policy

Because a significant amount of time must be reserved to treat your child with IV sedation, we would appreciate as much prior notice as possible if you need to reschedule your appointment. We understand that emergencies do occasionally arise, and in these situations, we will gladly reschedule your child for another date. However, if you should not keep the appointment and fail to notify us in a reasonable amount of time prior to the appointment (one week is requested), your deposit will not be returned. Cancellations for medical reasons within 24 business working hours of the appointment must be cancelled by the anesthesiologist or you must have a doctor's note confirming the illness.