



**Oxford Health**  
NHS Foundation Trust



Oxfordshire Community Dental Service

# **Intravenous sedation information**

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# What is intravenous sedation?

Intravenous sedation is used to help people who are very anxious cope with dental treatment. It is also useful if you are to have a surgical procedure performed.

## How is intravenous sedation given?

“Intravenous” means that the drug is given through a vein.

A very thin needle is placed into a vein close to the surface of the skin into either the back of the hand or the arm.

The needle is then removed leaving a soft plastic tube in place called a cannula.

The sedation drug is given through this plastic tube.

Throughout the procedure, your pulse and oxygen levels are measured using a “pulse oximeter”. This clips onto a finger and measures pulse and oxygen saturation.

# What does intravenous sedation feel like?

Intravenous sedation does not make you go to sleep.

You will feel drowsy and relaxed and will also be able to understand and respond to requests from your dentist.

Time will appear to pass very quickly, and most people remember very little of the treatment afterwards.

You may feel as if you have been to sleep.

You will still have local anaesthetic (an injection in the mouth to numb your tooth to be treated), but this will not be given until you are sedated.

## What drugs are used?

Anti-anxiety sedative drugs are used. In the UK, a benzodiazepine called midazolam is the most common drug used for intravenous sedation when not in a hospital setting.

## Is it safe?

As you are not unconscious intravenous sedation is very safe. The potential risks of a general anaesthetic are avoided.

## Before intravenous sedation

- i** You must bring a responsible adult with you. They must be present at the beginning of the appointment. Children must not be brought to the appointment. An accompanying adult is required for your safe journey home.
- i** You should not starve yourself. A light meal (for example tea and toast) is advisable together with small non-alcoholic drinks.
- i** You must take your routine medicines at the usual time. Bring inhalers with you.
- i** You should wear flat shoes and comfortable clothing that does not constrict your breathing or the ability to roll up your sleeves.
- i** You must not drink any alcohol for 24 hours before your appointment.
- i** You must not wear false nails, nail varnish or foundation make-up.
- i** You must phone if there is a change in your health or you develop a cough, cold or chest problems.

# After intravenous sedation

- ❗ You must travel home with your accompanying adult by car or taxi.
- ❗ You must stay resting quietly at home for the rest of the day with a responsible adult present.
- ❗ You must not work, drive, operate machinery or undertake strenuous exercise.
- ❗ You must not sign any legal or business documents until the following day.
- ❗ You must not drink alcohol for 24 hours after sedation.
- ❗ It is advised that you do not use social media for 24 hours after sedation.

## Advice for you from your dental professional

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings visible.

Use this **QR code** to find all Oxfordshire Community Dental Service leaflets. You can also access them in an accessible format.



# Accessibility

An accessible version of this leaflet can be found on our website: [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/cds](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/cds)

If you need the information in another language or format, please contact us.

## Get in touch

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## Feedback

Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) provides advice and support to patients, families, and carers, helping to resolve any problems, concerns, or complaints you may have.

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