south shore pediatric dentistry

Pre-op and post-op instruction for Nitrous Sedation

Preparing for Your Child's Sedation Visit

We have recommended sedation for your child's safety and comfort during dental procedures. Nitrous oxide/oxygen sedation can help increase cooperation and reduce anxiety and/or discomfort associated with dental treatment. Unlike general anesthesia, nitrous oxide/oxygen sedation is not intended to make a patient unconscious or unresponsive. Some children may not experience relaxation but an opposite reaction such as agitation or crying. These also are common responses to the medicine and may prevent us from completing the dental procedures. In any case, our staff will observe your child's response to the medications and provide assistance as needed.

You, as parent/legal guardian, play a key role in your child's dental care. Children often perceive a parent's anxiety which makes them more fearful. They tolerate procedures best when their parents understand what to expect and prepare them for the experience. If you have any questions about the sedation process, please ask. As you become more confident, so will your child. For your child's safety, you **must** follow the instructions below.

Prior to your child's sedation appointment:

- Please notify our office of any change in your child's health and/or medical condition. Fever, ear infection, nasal or chest congestion, or recent head trauma could place your child at increased risk for complications. Should your child become ill just prior to a sedation appointment, contact our office to see if it is necessary to postpone the sedation.

- Tell us about any prescribed, over-the-counter, or herbal medications your child is taking. Check with us to see if routine medications should be taken the day of the sedation. Also, report any allergies or reactions to medications that your child has experienced.

- Food and liquids must be restricted in the hours prior to sedation. Fasting decreases the risk of vomiting and aspirating stomach contents into the lungs, a potentially life-threatening problem. We will not proceed with the sedation if you do not comply with the following requirements

- Dress your child in loose-fitting, comfortable clothing. This will allow us to place blood pressure cuff and pulse ox to monitor your child's breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure. We want to ensure your child's safety

- Try not to bring other children to this appointment so you can focus your attention on your child undergoing the sedation.

- If you will be traveling home by automobile or if you must bring any other children with you to this appointment, it is preferable to have two adults accompany the patient home. On the way home, one individual should be able to observe the child's breathing and behaviors.

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Table 1. APPROPRIATE INTAKE OF FOOD AND LIQUIDS BEFORE ELECTIVE SEDATION*	
Ingested Material	**Minimum Fasting Period (h)**
Clear liquids: water, fruit juices without pulp, carbonated beverages, clear tea, black coffee	**2**
Breast milk	4
Infant formula	6
Nonhuman milk: because nonhuman milk is similar to solids in gastric emptying time, the amount ingested must be considered when determining an appropriate fasting period	6
Light meal: a light meal typically consists of toast and clear liquids. Meals that include fried or fatty foods or meat may prolong gastric emptying time. Both the amount and type of foods ingested must be considered when determining an appropriate fasting period.	6

*****American Society of Anesthesiologists. Practice Guidelines for Preoperative Fasting and the Use of Pharmacologic Agents to Reduce the Risk of Pulmonary Aspiration: Application to Healthy Patients Undergoing Elective Procedures. A Report of the American Society of Anesthesiologists

During the sedation appointment:

- You, as the child's parent/legal guardian, must remain at the office throughout the nitrous oxide/oxygen sedation appointment. You may not leave the office for any reason.

- Nausea and vomiting are occasional side effects of nitrous oxide/oxygen sedation.

- The doctor and staff will evaluate your child's health status before he/she will be discharged home. Children recover from effects of sedatives at different rates so be prepared to remain at our office until the doctor has determined your child is stable and the after-effects are minimal. At discharge, your child should be responsive but may be drowsy, crying, or fussy.

After the sedation appointment:

- Your child may be drowsy briefly after the nitrous oxide/oxygen sedation. Please remain in the dental chair until your child is fully recovered before getting discharged.

- We often use local anesthetic to numb the mouth during dental treatment. The numbness usually lasts two to four hours. Watch to see that your child does not bite, scratch, or injure the cheek, lips, or tongue during this time.

- If a tooth has been taken out, please follow our tooth extraction post-op instruction, given separately

- Children may be irritable after treatment. If this occurs, stay with your child and provide a calm environment. If you believe the irritability is caused by discomfort, you may give your child acetaminophen (Children's Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Children's Motrin® or Advil®). Follow the instructions on the bottle for dosing based upon your child's age/weight.

- You may give him/her sips of clear liquids to prevent nausea and dehydration. Small drinks taken repeatedly are preferable to large amounts. The first meal should be something light and easily digestible (eg, soup, Jell-O®, apple sauce). Do not give fatty or spicy foods (eg, French fries, tacos, salsa, milk, cheese, yogurt).

- Please feel free to call the office for any questions or concerns that you might have: **781.340.5437 (KIDS). If after hours, please listen carefully for instructions for the doctor on-call.**