



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS NITROUS OXIDE, AND WHAT IS IT USED FOR?

Nitrous Oxide (Laughing gas) is used to help children relax during dental treatment. While on Nitrous, your child's hands and feet may feel tingly and they may feel like they are floating. If children are very tired, sometimes they do nap while on N₂O. After the dental treatment, your child will be placed on 100% Oxygen which flushes out the Nitrous within about 5 minutes so that your child feels no lasting effects.

WHAT IS CONSCIOUS SEDATION?

Conscious sedation is a step above nitrous oxide in helping children relax for dental treatment. During a conscious sedation procedure, your child will drink medicine based on how much they weigh. It takes the medicine about 45-60 minutes to take effect. During this time you will wait with your child in our waiting area. When your child is brought to the treatment room, they will be placed on Nitrous Oxide and supplemental Oxygen to help them further relax. Conscious sedation is **NOT** meant to make a child fall completely asleep. It is only meant to help them relax so we can complete dental treatment. Some children will sleep during treatment.

HOW WILL MY CHILD BE MONITORED DURING CONSCIOUS SEDATION?

During conscious sedation appointment children's vitals are monitored at all times. This includes oxygen levels, blood pressure and heart rate. One-two people are always present with your child during conscious sedation.

HOW DO I CARE FOR MY CHILD AFTER CONSCIOUS SEDATION?

Your child will feel the lingering effects of the medicine for up to 6 or 7 hours. During this time you need to keep your child with you or another adult. They should not go to school or day care. They may feel groggy and want to take a nap for several hours. This is normal. They may have something to eat after the appointment, but you need to start with soft foods- i.e. soup, jello, applesauce non-dairy smoothie. They should not eat greasy foods or dairy products (milk, yogurt, ice cream) immediately, as it may cause them to feel sick to their stomach. A good rule of thumb is to avoid any foods that have ever given you heartburn.

WHAT IS GENERAL ANESTHESIA?

For children who are too young for conscious sedation (under 3 years), have very extensive dental treatment, or have very bad dental anxiety, sometimes General Anesthesia (GA) is recommended. During GA appointments, an anesthesiologist works with us in our office to provide the anesthesia. During this appointment, your child is completely asleep and all dental treatment will be completed at this visit. During this time the Anesthesiologist's only job is to make sure that your child is safe and comfortable. This allows your dentist to concentrate solely on your child's dental needs while the Anesthesiologist concentrates on your child's safety.

HOW DO I CARE FOR MY CHILD AFTER GENERAL ANESTHESIA (GA)?

Patients may feel sleepy for several hours after GA. They should stay inside for the remainder of the day, and avoid activities that require full coordination (bikes, swimming, play-ground, sports). Patients may have a slight fever and become flushed after GA. Children may start drinking clear liquids after the appointment (water, Gatorade, apple juice). Slowly introduce solid foods throughout the day. Avoid meat and dairy for 2-3 hours. Nausea and vomiting may occur. If this happens, have your child drink clear liquids until the nausea or vomiting passes. They may take Tylenol or ibuprofen if there is any discomfort from dental treatment.

CAN MY CHILD EAT AND DRINK BEFORE THEIR DENTAL APPOINTMENT?

If your child is scheduled for conscious sedation or General Anesthesia they **CAN NOT** eat or drink 6 hours prior to their appointment. These appointments will be cancelled if they have eaten. This is for your child's safety. If they have eaten or drank prior to their appointment, it is very dangerous for them to be sedated. Even a single Cheerios will begin the process of digestion causing a release of digestive juices into your child's stomach. We generally are not concerned about the Cheerios, we are concerned about these digestive enzymes. So please, do not feed your child anything the day of their conscious sedation or General Anesthesia appointment unless specifically instructed to do so by the Anesthesiologist.

CAN I BE IN THE ROOM WITH MY CHILD FOR DENTAL TREATMENT?

During all procedures (exams, Nitrous oxide, and conscious sedation) one parent is able to be in the treatment area. During General Anesthesia, parents are able to be with their child when they fall asleep and wake up, but not during treatment. During this time, you are asked to wait in the lobby. The office staff will bring you updates during treatment.

WHAT TYPE OF FILLINGS WILL MY CHILD HAVE?

We only do composite (white- colored) fillings in our office. We do not place amalgam (silver) fillings.

WHY DO YOU NEED TO DO CROWNS ON BABY TEETH?

Sometimes children have large cavities, or cavities on multiple parts of the tooth which are best treated with crowns. On back baby teeth we use stainless steel crowns; these are silver colored. On front teeth we use white-colored crowns.

HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF CROWNS AFTER MY CHILD HAS THEM?

Your child's gums may be sore for several days after crowns are placed. You can give them Tylenol or ibuprofen for any discomfort. You should brush and floss crowns just like any other teeth. After brushing the crowns should be silver and shiny. If there is any white on the crown, they need to be brushed again as this is plaque that hasn't been removed.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AFTER MY CHILD HAS AN EXTRACTION (TOOTH PULLED)?

Sometimes after extractions, children experience no discomfort at all. However, sometimes there can be some pain and swelling. You can give your child Tylenol or ibuprofen for pain. This should resolve within 1-2 days. We recommend softer foods (pasta, rice, soup etc.) for the first day after an extraction. Hot liquids (temperature not spicy) may cause an increase in blood flow and bleeding at the extraction site. Although this won't hurt anything it may scare your child so please, no hot chocolate for a couple of days.

WHAT IS A SPACE-MAINTAINER?

After a tooth has been extracted, many times we need to place a space-maintainer. This is a small ring that helps the adjacent teeth from shifting position while we wait for the adult tooth to erupt. Sometimes space maintainers may stay in a child's mouth for several years. During regular check-ups we will monitor the spacer and remove it when the new/adult tooth is about to erupt. They should not cause discomfort. If your child's spacer is loose or causing pain, please contact our office.

MY CHILD JUST HAD DENTAL WORK AND NOW HAS A SWOLLEN LIP, WHAT HAPPENED?

Occasionally after dental treatment, children will bite their cheek, tongue or lip. It is very important to monitor your child closely after their appointment that you don't see them sucking or biting on their lip. If they do bite their lip, you can place ice on the area to help with swelling. You can also give them Tylenol or ibuprofen for pain. These areas will heal in several days. The biggest help in this is to keep them from continuing to chew. Bit lips very rarely get infected, however they can look very bad during the healing process. If you notice a bit lip please contact our office so we can look at it. On rare occasions we may need to prescribe antibiotics.

HOW DO I HELP MY CHILD FROM GETTING MORE CAVITIES?

The most important way to keep from getting cavities, is a healthy diet and good brushing. Parents should help children brush their teeth twice a day until they are at least 8 years old. Another way to help prevent cavities is to avoid juice and sweet drinks (sweet tea, soda, lemonade, sports drinks) on a regular basis. Drinking water with meals or after snacks helps wash off the food and sugars from teeth.

DOES BREAST MILK CAUSE CAVITIES?

Yes, like all other liquids with sugars in it, breast milk does cause cavities. While we all agree that it is fantastic for both growth and brain development, we do want to stress that it is important to keep the milk off the teeth. Simply wiping the teeth off with a wet washcloth after feeding will help immensely in keeping your child cavity free.

IS CHEWING GUM BAD FOR TEETH?

Sugar-free chewing gum is actually very good for teeth and helps prevent cavities. The chewing gum increases the saliva in your child's mouth which naturally cleanses the teeth and buffers the acids in your child's mouth. Some examples are: Stride, Orbit, trident,