

Inhalation sedation for children's dental treatment

Information for patients, parents and carers

This leaflet contains information about inhalation sedation for dental treatment and will help you to understand the treatment your child will have. If you have any questions, please speak to a member of staff looking after your child.

Confirming your child's identity

Before your child has a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you to confirm their name and date of birth and check their ID band. If your child does not have an ID band, we will also ask you to confirm their address. If we do not ask these questions, then please ask us to check.

What is inhalation sedation (IS)?

Inhalation sedation is a technique using a gas called **nitrous oxide** which is delivered with oxygen by a small mask placed on your child's nose. It is used when a child is nervous about dental treatment or is having a procedure which may cause discomfort.

What is nitrous oxide?

This is the same as 'laughing gas' or 'happy air' given to mothers during childbirth. It is a sedative which reduces anxiety, making the child a bit drowsy and less aware of the procedure.

Why does my child need inhalation sedation?

Inhalation sedation will help to reduce fear, anxiety and improve co-operation in children, without the need for a general anaesthetic.

Are there any risks or side effects?

It is extremely safe. It is very effective if your child can breathe through their nose. Nitrous oxide leaves the body as soon as your child stops breathing it. Your child may feel tired after the sedation. Sometimes young children do not understand the feeling of 'numbness' which they often mistake for pain, so reassure your child and try to distract them.

Consent

We must by law obtain your written consent to any operation and some other procedures beforehand. Staff will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives before they ask you to sign a consent form. If you are unsure about any aspect of the treatment proposed, please do not hesitate to ask to speak with a senior member of staff again.

What are the benefits of inhalation sedation?

Inhalation sedation will reduce your child's anxiety and make them feel more relaxed. It is also helpful in children with a strong gag reflex.

Do I need to prepare my child for inhalation sedation?

Your child should eat a light meal before the appointment. If your child has a cold or cannot breathe through their nose, the sedation may not work. Please call us to cancel and re-arrange the appointment.

If your child is taking medication, they must take it as usual.

If my child is unwell, can I still bring them?

Do not come to the appointment if your child is unwell. Please call us to cancel the appointment as soon as possible.

Who can bring my child?

Your child should be accompanied by their parent or legal guardian as consent will need to be confirmed.

Can I bring other children with me?

It is best to avoid bringing other children with you to the appointment.

Where will it be carried out?

The treatment will be carried out in the Paediatric Dentistry clinic.

What happens during inhalation sedation?

Inhalation sedation gives a pleasant, warm, tingling sensation and a feeling of wellbeing. Your child should then become more confident with each visit. Once sedated, your child will have topical and local anaesthesia to numb the area to avoid pain during the procedure. The length of time your child will be treated will depend on the procedure they are having and how cooperative they are.

What happens after inhalation sedation?

Your child will recover sitting in the dental chair.

How soon can I take my child home?

You can take them home as soon as they are alert and responsive, which should only take a few minutes.

Can my child return to school?

Yes, your child may go back to school, although care must be taken to avoid biting the numb lip or cheek. If an extraction was carried out, your child should not participate in sports or games for the rest of the day as this could cause bleeding.

Can my child eat afterwards?

Your child can drink normally however, it may be better to avoid eating until the numb feeling has gone away. Please follow the instructions in the [Caring for your child's mouth after tooth extractions or minor oral surgery](#) leaflet (can be accessed via QR code below).



Please use the QR codes or links below to help prepare your child for what to expect on the day.

[Inhalation sedation for young children: Fluffy the Bear](#)



[Your Teeth You Are In Control worksheet](#)



Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the information in this leaflet, please contact the Department of Paediatric Dentistry team. If your child has persistent bleeding, severe swelling or severe pain, please contact us. If out of hours or at weekends, please call NHS 111 or attend your local A&E department for advice.

Central Referral Office	020 3299 4988
Clinic Appointments	020 3299 3055
Secretary	020 3299 3375
	020 3299 4983

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.kch.nhs.uk/patientsvisitors/patients/leaflets

Sharing your information

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your dentist if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleton Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net