



Sedation is when medicine is used to make you feel more relaxed and less anxious at the dentist.



A small cannula is usually placed in the back of your hand or in your arm after the oral sedation has taken effect



You will be watched closely during your treatment



It is important you tell your dentist about your medical history

Oral Sedation

Information for patients, parents or carers

What is oral sedation?

The person in your care may require oral sedation for dental treatment. The use of a sedative drug (medicine) makes them drowsy, less aware of what is happening and with few memories of the treatment. Oral sedation does not make you unconscious.

Oral sedation is usually given as a single drug called midazolam. A dose, chosen for each individual will be given via mouth. The sedation usually takes 20 minutes to take effect.

Once the person is sedated (drowsy), a needle is used to place a cannula (small plastic tube) into a vein in the back of the hand or in the arm. This allows more midazolam to be administered so that treatment can be carried out safely, or a drug can be given that reverses the effect of the sedation, if this is necessary.

Benefits and risks of oral sedation

Oral sedation is used to reduce anxiety and fear of dental treatment.

The dentist and members of the dental team are trained to give sedation. They watch the person closely and treat any problems that may develop. They are required to use appropriate monitoring equipment during sedation.

It is a widely used technique but, as with all medicines, there are risks associated with oral sedation.

Oral midazolam is routinely used as a licensed medicine for children between 6 months and 14 years. Its use in adults is 'off-label' in the UK. However, there is a large amount of evidence to support this technique. Off-label medications are only prescribed if it is appropriate to do so, and only after careful consideration that it is in the best interests of the patient.

Risks Include:

- A reduction of oxygen in the blood stream due to slower breathing during sedation. The person may be asked by the dental team to take deep breaths to correct this. The dental team will continually monitor their breathing and oxygen levels throughout the procedure. An oxygen supply will be available and oxygen will be given if necessary.
- Bruising at the site of the cannula. This may take several days to fade completely.
- There is also a risk that the person may not like the feeling of sedation, in which case the sedation may be stopped.
- Very rare risks are allergic reactions to the sedative drugs or preservatives in the medicine such as orange flavour (E1520), Glycerol (E422), hydrochloric acid or sucralose.

Please let the dental team know if you have known allergies to above.



Your dentist will discuss what you can eat or drink before the treatment



You will be given information in writing



You may spend some time resting until you are allowed to go home



You cannot go home on your own



You will be given a telephone number of who to contact

How to prepare

Please take your routine medicines as normal – unless you have been told not to by the dentist. Any medicines or inhalers that the patient may need should be brought with you to the appointment.

Dress in loose, comfortable clothing. No valuables should be brought to the appointment.

If the person is unwell on the day with cold/flu symptoms, vomiting, diarrhoea or any contagious illness, please contact the dentist for advice. The appointment may need to be rearranged.

You must be escorted by a responsible adult escort who has no other caring responsibilities that day. Please do not bring children, animals or other dependents with you on the day of treatment.

Your escort must remain on the premises for the duration of the appointment, although they do not have to stay in the surgery or waiting room.

After treatment has finished, the patient will spend some time in the recovery area until alert and responsive. He or she will be checked by the dentist before being allowed to go home.

The person may not return to school/college/work or their usual activities for the rest of the day. This includes participation in active sports, the signing of legal documents or posting online/social media. After treatment, you should travel home with your escort in a private car or taxi.

The person must be supervised by a responsible adult for the rest of the day. Arrangements may need to be made for the care of other children or elderly dependent relatives during this time.

The dental team will advise you about post-operative care at home.

You will be given a telephone number of who to contact in case of any concerns.

Dental Access Centre
RD&E (Heavitree)
Gladstone Road,
Exeter,
EX1 2ED

✉ rduh.sds-exeter@nhs.net

🌐 www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/services/salaried-dental-service/

☎ 01392 405718

NHS

Royal Devon
University Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust