

Sedation

General Anesthesia

Also called sleep dentistry, general anesthesia can relieve pain and anxiety by making a patient unconscious during dental procedures. For patients with intense dental fear or those who need major dental procedures, sleep dentistry presents an option that is both comfortable and practical.

If you and the dentist determine that your case is right for sleep dentistry, the dentist may use oral medication or IV sedation. Sleep dentistry has helped many patients overcome the barriers created by profound anxieties about dental procedures that stand in the way of optimal oral health.

Oral Conscious Sedation

To relieve the very real and often debilitating anxiety associated with dental phobia, we also offer oral conscious sedation, known as sedation dentistry. Patients who feel stressed about dental work, as well as those who need multiple procedures performed in one visit, benefit from conscious sedation.

The procedure involves taking an oral sedative prior to your visit, then receiving nitrous oxide (laughing gas) to supplement the sedative's effects. Your vital signs and comfort level are keenly monitored throughout your visit.

Nitrous Oxide and How Does It Work?

Commonly referred to as laughing gas, nitrous oxide is used in surgery and dentistry for its pain blocking and reducing effects. It is known as "laughing gas" due to the euphoric effects of inhaling it. The administration of nitrous oxide is used to enhance patient comfort and relieve anxiety for patients of all ages. The gas (a nitrous oxide and oxygen mixture) is inhaled through a face mask. The amount of gas that you receive is monitored and controlled by the dentist to ensure your safety. You will begin to relax and will not recognize pain, so the dentist can perform your dental work while you stay completely comfortable. The effects of nitrous oxide decrease once the mask is removed, such that if the gas is the only anesthesia that you receive, you will very likely be capable of driving yourself home following the visit and can continue your daily activities as normal.

IV Conscious Sedation

While IV sedation can be used for general anesthesia (to induce a state of unconsciousness), it can also be used for conscious sedation. This type of sedation induces an altered state of consciousness, also known as a "twilight" state, which is a groggy state of mind and a relaxed body. This form of sedation minimizes pain and discomfort through the use of pain relievers and sedatives. Patients who receive conscious sedation usually are able to speak and respond to verbal cues throughout the procedure, communicating any discomfort they experience to the dentist. While you are under the effects of the drug, the dentist can perform your dental work, and you will remain comfortable. A brief period of amnesia may erase any memory of the procedure. After your procedure(s), you will need a ride home from the dental office. The following day, the sedative will clear the body so that you can resume daily activities.