

A Patient's Guide to

Sedation

Dentistry

Dentistry at Happy Canyon

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## Does IV Sedation Put You Completely To Sleep?

When you go to your local dentist's office, the procedures you're going for often don't require sedation. After all, there's not much pain when a dentist is examining your teeth, or when they're polishing them. However, sometimes you have to treat something a bit more tender. Something like a cavity, or a dental abscess, or a root canal. Sometimes, your dentist will be working on something that is likely to be more painful, and when that happens, you are going to find that sedation is a great thing for helping you get through the procedure.

### What is IV Sedation?

IV sedation is a method of delivering sedatives to your bloodstream intravenously. It is different than an oral sedative or nitrous oxide (sometimes known as 'laughing gas'), in that it tends to have a much more powerful impact on you. It is different than local anesthesia, which usually numbs the area that the dentist will work on, in that it lessens the sensation you will experience as a whole.

IV sedation is not appropriate for every situation. If you're just getting a filling for a cavity, you will probably be better off with something like local anesthesia. When you move into more intense work, general anesthesia via IV becomes more and more necessary.

## Does IV Sedation Put You Completely To Sleep?

Depending on the procedure, the patient, and the dentist, IV sedation can operate in a variety of ways. The two most common are a twilight sleep and a deep sleep, but your dentist can utilize IV sedation to put you in varying stages of consciousness as is appropriate for your needs.

Twilight sleep refers to a state where you may be aware, at least somewhat, of your surroundings, what's going on, and what is being said. However, you will be much less aware than you would normally be, and you may feel a bit distant from everything while under sedation. After the procedure concludes, you may not remember much of it.

On the other hand, IV sedation can also put you into a deep sleep. If you have a lot of anxiety concerning dental procedures, or if the procedure is going to be exceedingly intricate or in a sensitive area, this may be the best option for you. With proper IV sedation, you will sleep through the entire procedure and remember none of it.

What kind of sedation is best for you is a decision that you need to make with your dentist, so seeking their advice is key.

## How Safe Is IV Sedation

IV sedation, also often known as general anesthesia, is not a new idea. Sedation for medical uses is seen in history going back to the Mesopotamians, with the use of opium. IV sedation is a 20th century invention; utilizing sodium thiopental, human testing began in 1934 at the Mayo

Clinic to gauge the effectiveness of the treatment, as well as the safety. The findings were promising, and our medical technology has only improved in the decades since.

### Is IV Sedation Safe?

IV sedation is commonly known as general anesthesia, and it has been in common use in medicine for decades now. If you go to a hospital for surgery, especially more extreme surgeries and more invasive procedures, you're likely to experience IV sedation. The methods of sedation, the materials in use, and the techniques for helping a patient post-sedation are improving all the time.

That's not to say that there are no risks to IV sedation in general. However, if you are a healthy person, with no history of major illness or conditions, your local IV sedation dentist will be able to utilize such sedation to good effect.

Thankfully, IV sedation dentists are more than capable of identifying risk factors and those who are most at-risk from general anesthesia. This is why it is so important that, before undergoing IV sedation, you are honest with your doctor or dentist or anesthesiologist. They're asking questions about your health and medical history to make sure that you will be fine when they sedate you, and to ensure that they utilize the right sedative in the right quantities to put you under while they work on your teeth.

There are many benefits to IV sedation, which we will touch on later in this guide. However, there is a reason that IV sedation is so popular in the medical and dental fields, and there is a reason that sedation in general has been in use

since 3400BCE or earlier. It is a useful tool to help your dentist or doctor to be able to perform intricate surgeries on sensitive areas without worrying about patient reactions to pain.

If you have any worries about IV sedation, voice them with your local IV sedation dentist. They will be able to give you an honest assessment concerning your specific needs, and they can identify and properly present the risks and rewards to IV sedation for your dental needs.

### What Are Side Effects Of IV Sedation?

IV sedation does not come without side effects, as you would expect. You can't expect a substance to dull you to the world around you and to limit the pain or discomfort you feel during an operation without their being something to it, after all. However, when you look at it rationally, the risk of side effects does not outweigh the benefits that you can find from utilizing IV sedation for your more sensitive dental operations.

### What Side Effects Can I Expect?

A few of the common side effects of IV sedation are:

- Drowsiness - You're likely to feel drowsy after going under general anesthesia. This is why when you have IV sedation dentistry, you must bring an escort with you. They will have to drive you home, and they will likely have to babysit you for a day or so after the procedure until the sedation wears off entirely.

- **Altered Consciousness** - When you wake up, you're still going to be under the effects of sedation for a while longer. You may act somewhat strangely, which is another reason that an escort is so important. However, this is just temporary, and you will feel yourself after a day or so.
- **Dry Mouth** - A common side effect of sedation is that your mouth feels dry. This can last for up to a day after your sedation, and while it is a nuisance, it isn't much of a problem. Keep drinking water normally and you'll feel a bit better, but the dry mouth shouldn't last very long, and usually your mouth will feel normal within 24 hours.
- **Amnesia** - You are likely to not remember much, if anything, of the procedure. For those who are anxious about receiving dental treatment, this is more of a positive aspect of the sedation. After IV sedation begins, you're going to be in an altered state of consciousness, and you are not likely to remember much of what goes on.

Depending on your personal medical history, there may be other side effects. The best way to get a full understanding of what will happen to you during and after IV sedation for dental procedures, it is best that you contact your local IV sedation dentist for a consultation. They can help you to understand the specifics, and to understand what you are likely to experience, and can do so with a much greater degree of accuracy.

## Is IV Sedation An Option For Tooth Extraction

Some may be wondering where the cut-off is. What kind of dental procedure or surgery is too minimal or too non-invasive for IV sedation? If I have a tooth that needs extracting, can I utilize IV sedation to help ensure I'm not conscious of the procedure I'm undergoing, as well as minimizing the pain I'll feel the first day or so after the procedure?

Well, if you're worrying about an upcoming tooth extraction, or if you've been putting off removing a tooth out of fear that the pain will be unbearable and the experience miserable, you can rest easy. Dentists across the country are more than happy to utilize IV sedation for those who have a tooth needing extraction.

### In What Way Is IV Sedation Useful For A Tooth Extraction?

A tooth extraction can be a painful experience, especially if the tooth has been falling apart for quite some time. If the tooth has fallen too far into disrepair, it may even require more extreme surgery to scavenge the remainder of the tooth out of the mouth. All that cutting and pulling does not sound like it would be pleasant at the best of times, but it is also necessary.

IV sedation is not like local anesthesia. A dentist will apply local anesthesia via a needle to the area that the dentist will operate on or perform a procedure upon. This allows for a numbing of the area that the procedure will act upon.

On the other hand, IV sedation will help by relaxing your body and allowing the dentist to extract a tooth, or multiple teeth, with little interference. Even with the numbing of the area your dentist will operate on, you may still react in various ways, and you may even feel some degree of sensation.

Another problem that is common with more serious dental procedures is anxiety. People get nervous about the idea of an operation of any kind, even simple ones. When that operation is in their mouth, some people do not react well. That tension and those reactions, accidental or not, can result in issues for even a dentist with years of experience and considerable skill. However, with the use of IV sedation, the patient can be put in a state that will leave them less responsive and much less likely to overreact while the dentist is performing complex oral surgery.

If you have worries about your upcoming tooth extraction, you can always ask your dentist about the possibilities for sedation. Be sure to mention if you have anxiety about having an operation, and your dentist will be able to take that into consideration when discussing your choices with you.

## Benefits To Wisdom Teeth Removal Through IV Sedation

Of all the surgery that a dentist might do, there are few things that are as terrifying to the patient as wisdom tooth removal. We don't often remove our wisdom teeth because they have fallen into a state of disrepair due to poor dental hygiene. Most often, we have to remove our wisdom teeth because our mouths cannot fit that many teeth in them, and the least essential teeth are the wisdom teeth.

### What Does Removal Of Wisdom Teeth Entail?

The wisdom teeth are the teeth furthest back in the mouth. They are also the teeth that come into your mouth latest in life, if they come in at all (and for some people, they won't come in). For some people, they will crowd the other teeth, causing malocclusions and dental pain in general, making them feel miserable. Whatever the case, some people just do not have the room in their mouth to keep their wisdom teeth.

Because of that, removal of the wisdom teeth is common dental surgery, especially for those in their mid-to-late twenties or older. For some people, the teeth come in just fine and cause no discomfort, but for others, the teeth coming in will require dental surgery to solve the issues with the overcrowding of the teeth.

Removal of the wisdom teeth is very similar to the removal of teeth elsewhere in the mouth, but with a few differences. These are:

- How far back in the mouth the teeth are. Removing a tooth in the front of the mouth is a much simpler affair, and can occur with little effort. Teeth in the back of the mouth are more difficult to get to, and this makes the surgery more difficult.
- The health of the teeth. Extracting teeth in disrepair is a simple thing, but removing teeth that are healthy requires more effort, and can take more force.

### How Does Sedation Help With The Process?

Sedation not only relaxes the patient, but makes them less likely to react in ways that aren't conducive to the procedure. When a dentist is working to remove a tooth from an area that is so difficult to reach and manipulate, having a patient who is less responsive is a good thing. In other words, IV sedation can help to ensure that the removal of the teeth goes smoothly, and it has the additional benefit of making the surgery simpler for your dentist

If you have worries about your wisdom teeth extraction, it doesn't hurt to ask your sedation dentist what they think about your options for sedation during your wisdom tooth extraction.

## How Much Does IV Sedation Cost?

To many, this sounds like a great deal. IV sedation can do a lot of good, and it can make getting dental surgery a much simpler process. With so many people suffering from some level of anxiety concerning their dentist and dental procedures, IV sedation, and general anesthesia, are a wonderful way to make the procedures easier on all that the process involves.

### How Much Does It Cost?

But surely, IV sedation must be expensive, right? It requires additional training for the dentist, it requires additional materials, it requires additional insurance, it requires additional knowledge, and it adds time and effort to procedures that are already complex and difficult. Will all this mean a much larger bill for the procedure?

Well, there are a variety of things that go into determining the cost of IV sedation for your procedure. A few of the things that will be taken into consideration when determining price include:

- The length of the procedure. The longer the procedure takes to complete, the more work you're doing at one time, the more you are going to pay for your IV sedation.
- State licensing costs. In the US, licensing is done at the state level. Some states charge more to get a license to provide sedation dentistry, while others charge less. The cost of your sedation can change depending on the state your dentist operates in, therefore, due to the

cost of licensing.

- Your dentist, their practice, and their experience. Dentists are just like every other profession out there; the better they are at their job, the more experience they have, and the more knowledge they have, the more money they can charge for their services. If you're going to a sedation dentist with decades of experience, it may cost a bit more.

So, when you go to get a tooth removal and you receive IV sedation, what is it going to cost you? The general answer is that IV sedation costs about four to five hundred dollars per visit. However, before that number makes you think it is expensive, keep in mind that IV sedation helps your dentist to get more work done at once. While under sedation, a patient is likely to be able to undergo many procedures, work that can take hours. IV sedation helps dentists to get more work done, as well, and when you take into consideration the work that your dentist may accomplish while you're under sedation, that cost begins to seem much more reasonable.

### How Long Does IV Sedation Last?

When you go to the dentist and have to have some sort of anesthetic to numb the pain of a procedure, how long the effects will continue to last are always a question. And when you have no experience with the process of IV sedation, it's

only natural to wonder how long it will be until you're back to feeling yourself.

### How Long Do Other Anesthetics Last?

That all depends on the kind of anesthetic that the dentist uses, as well as the quantity they use. Different kinds of surgery require different anesthetics.

For an easy example, and one that is common, most people have gone to the dentist and had to fill a cavity. The dentist will have to drill into your tooth to do this, so that means that you're going to need some sort of local anesthetic. Commonly, they use Novocain to do this. Novocain dulls the sensation of pain (and most sensation, really) in the area near the site that they will operate on. It doesn't alter your state of consciousness, and it doesn't put people to sleep. At most, it makes the mouth feel puffy and asleep. Depending on how much the dentists uses, most people have their sense of feeling back within a few hours of the procedure finishing. When it comes to other methods, the duration of the effects can be even shorter. Nitrous Oxide, commonly known as 'laughing gas', doesn't last very long at all. In fact, it is one of the fastest gasses to escape the body, leaving within five to ten minutes after the flow ends. It goes quickly, and you will be back to normal quite swiftly after the flow of laughing gas ceases.

### So How Long Does IV Sedation Last?

Again, this is a question that needs some specificity to give a precise answer. However, to speak in generalizations, within twenty-four hours of the procedure's completion, you should no longer be feeling the impact of IV sedation.

This is all dependent on the amount of sedative that the dentist uses, the particular sedative, and the duration of the procedure. You are putting sedatives into your blood stream, after all. However, the high-end number for the duration of the effects is twenty-four hours, and the reality is that, depending on the work your dentist will do, it may be less than that, but it is not likely to be more.

However, during those twenty-four hours, you are going to need assistance. That's why you must bring an escort with you to any procedure involving IV sedation, and it is important you comply with this.

IV sedation can make complex procedures much more bearable for both you and your dentist, though, and lessen pain immensely. If you have dental anxiety, it can also help you by keeping you unconscious or barely conscious of the procedure going on during your sedation.

## Pros And Cons Of Nitrous Oxide Compared To IV Sedation

So, if nitrous oxide wears off so swiftly, why is it not a better method for sedating a patient that has to undergo dental surgery? You would think that something that allows patients to return to a normal state within minutes of the completion of a procedure would be a much preferable way to sedate patients. While this may be true in some instances, there are pros and cons to both methods of sedation.

### Nitrous Oxide

Nitrous oxide, sometimes known as laughing gas, is a gas that you inhale throughout the procedure in small quantities. Usually, the patient will wear a mask, and through this mask will flow two different kinds of gases; nitrous oxide, and oxygen. These two gases will cause the patient to feel more at ease during the procedure.

### A few of the upsides of nitrous oxide include:

- Retaining the ability to move and react during a procedure. You're more at ease, but you can still move.
- Nitrous oxide wears off quickly. In most cases, you will be good as new after only a few minutes, five or ten, after the flow of nitrous oxide is cut off.
- The gas is mild and non-addictive.
- The gas doesn't limit consciousness.

The downsides are:

- While the gas may relax you, it can't do much to stop you from suffering from any anxiety that you may usually have concerning dental work
- It has some associated health issues in large quantities. These quantities aren't likely to have an impact on the patient, but rather on the dentist utilizing nitrous oxide.

### IV Sedation

IV sedation is exactly what it sounds like; your dentist will sedate you with the use of a sedative delivered intravenously. This sedative will put you in a 'twilight sleep', or it may put you to sleep altogether. In doing this, you will be likely to have little, if any, memory of the procedure.

#### **A few positives of IV sedation include:**

- Better for those with dental anxiety. You will barely know what's going on when you're under IV sedation, and this means that you won't be likely to be anxious.
- A loss of sense of time. This is especially useful for those who are undergoing procedures that will take a long time to complete.
- The dulling of most sensations. You will be less likely to feel as much pain.

#### **The downsides are:**

- IV sedation will alter your mental state and acuity for a while. You will not be able to drive yourself home after

you procedure, for example.

- Due to this, you will need an escort, which can be difficult for some to find.

Which is better for you is something that you will need to discuss with your dentist. If you have a lot of anxiety concerning dental work, it may be better for you to look into IV sedation. Otherwise, you may be just fine with the nitrous oxide.

## What Other Sedation Options Are Available

Besides IV sedation and nitrous oxide, what other methods for sedating a dental patient are in common use today? What would be a good option for someone who isn't going to be in the dentist's chair for a long time, or for someone who doesn't have to worry about anxiety concerning dental procedures?

### What Are Other Sedation Options?

IV sedation and nitrous oxide aren't the only options for you if you're looking for sedation when you're going to undergo a dental procedure. There are a number of other options that you can consider if you're looking for a way to get through the procedure without being in pain or anxious.

The most common method of numbing the pain in dental procedures is localized anesthesia. This is what the dentist will do if you just need a filling for a cavity, or something similar. It is quite a simple process, that really only needs a few steps; namely, identifying the area for the procedure, and then utilizing a compound (like Novocain), via injection into the area, to make the procedure much less painful. The only downside of this sedation option is that your face will feel strange for a while, until the Novocain subsides, like it is unusually puffy. However, this is only good for small procedures, and its usefulness lessens when you move on to bigger procedures.

For larger procedures, your dentist will combine the use of a

local anesthetic (such as Novocain) with the use of a sedative, something to keep the patient calm during the procedure. Here are just a few other sedation options.

### Oral Sedation

Another common method for sedating the patient before a procedure is oral sedation. Unlike nitrous oxide or similar compounds, this simply requires that the patient take a pill, often something in the same family of medications as Valium. The patient takes the pill an hour before the procedure, which gives it plenty of time to kick in. The pill will make you feel a bit more at ease, and may even cause some moderate grogginess. In larger doses, the pill may even make you so groggy that you can fall asleep during the procedure.

### Moderate/Deep Sedation

When you and your dentist turn to IV sedation for your procedure, the reason is to achieve a moderate or deep sedation. However, the impact of the two on your state of consciousness is a bit different.

In moderate sedation, you may be awake. Your speaking will likely show signs of slurring, and your memory of the procedure will be minimal. The IV will keep the sedative in your system during the procedure, and it will wear off in the hours or day after.

In deep sedation, you are conscious, but just barely. You may be able to react to commands, but you'll be in a 'twilight' sleep, barely awake.

In general anesthesia, you're asleep. You are unresponsive

to verbal commands, and will sleep through almost anything. These are a few of the kinds of sedation available to you if you need to have dental work under sedation. As always, the best way to choose the right sedation for you is to work with your local professional sedation dentist.

## What Is Intravenous Sedation?

Intravenous sedation is a method of sedation that has been in use in medicine for decades. Sedation itself, the idea of using substances to help calm a patient and keep them in a state of greater relaxation during a medical (or dental) procedure is much older than intravenous sedation alone. In fact, historians believe that the first use of sedation was in 3800 BCE, and that ancient man was in the habit of utilizing substances such as opium for sedative purposes.

Intravenous sedation is the practice of putting a sedative into the body via the bloodstream. Instead of being something that the patient smokes or inhales, they simply have an IV line run into their arm, just the same as they would in any hospital, and a sedative is put into their body this way.

## What Is The Use Of IV Sedation In Dentistry?

So, what is the use of IV sedation in dentistry? It's true, when most people think of IV sedation, they think of people in the hospital, undergoing surgeries, medical procedures that are complex and that require a patient to be completely still. Very few people think of sedation and dentistry in the same sentence.

And it's true. Not every procedure your dentist will do requires sedation. There are many procedures your dentist can do (like filling a cavity, for an easy example) that will require nothing more than some local anesthetic, if they even require that.

So who needs IV sedation, and when does it become necessary? Well, IV sedation is useful in that it alters the consciousness of the person that is undergoing the procedure.

**This can include effects such as:**

- Distortion of sensation of time
- Lessening of anxiety

Both of these side effects are fantastic for working on dental patients. To begin with, distorting the sensation of time means that while a patient may be asleep or nearly asleep, they won't experience the hour(s) of dental work. They can just lie comfortably in the chair as the dentist goes about their work.

Many people suffer from anxiety when it comes to dental work, and for them, moderate sedation or more is a great way to help them to get through a dental procedure with ease. It lessens the pain they feel, it lessens their anxiety, and it can keep the patient calm throughout the entire process of whatever needs doing.

If you're looking for more information on IV sedation and its uses in dentistry, be sure to talk to your local sedation dentist. They will have a wealth of information on how it may be useful to you in particular, and will be more than happy to discuss ways it can help make your dental procedures more comfortable.



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