Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Inhalation Sedation for Children

Version number: **2**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Parent and Carer Information

Maxillo Facial – Head and Neck Services

- Author ID: LT
- Leaflet ref: MX 010
- Last Review: October 2025
- Expiry Date: October 2027

Introduction

This leaflet will explain about inhalation sedation for your child's dental treatment. It will highlight the risks and benefits and what you and your child can expect to happen during their treatment.

What is Inhalation Sedation?

Inhalation sedation is often called 'happy air'. It is a mixture of two gases, oxygen and nitrous oxide.

Aims

Children, who need dental extractions, may quite often feel anxious, worried or scared. Inhalation sedation will help your child feel less anxious and more relaxed for their treatment. Inhalation sedation will not make your child unconscious; they will remain awake and still be able to communicate.

Risks to Parent

Please inform a member of staff if there is a possibility that you could be pregnant as there is a potential risk of nitrous oxide causing harm to the unborn child

Benefits

The gas does not have any smell and will make your child feel less anxious during their treatment.

Once your child is sedated feeling drowsy and relaxed the surgeon will use a local anaesthetic and will numb the site where the treatment is needed and this will

reduce discomfort during treatment. Once the surgery has been completed the nitrous oxide will be stopped and replaced with oxygen only for a small period of time. We will keep your child on the operating chair for a few minutes to ensure that they have fully recovered. During this time we will continue to monitor them. Approximately 30 minutes after surgery and once they have fully recovered they will be allowed to go home.

How you can prepare your child before their treatment

Encourage your child to practise breathing through their nose with their mouth left open.

If you have other children we would appreciate it if you leave them with a responsible adult at home so that you can concentrate all of your time with the child who is having treatment.

We would recommend that they enjoy a light meal and a drink up to one hour before their appointment.

Treatment will need to be postponed if the parent or legal guardian does not attend the appointment to sign the consent.

If your child is on routine medication we would ask that you give it to them as normal on the day, and bring any medicines or inhalers with you on the day of treatment.

If your child is unwell on the day of the appointment or has a ‘blocked nose’ please phone the department for advice. Your appointment may need to be re-arranged.

After Sedation

We would recommend that your child avoids any physical activity e.g. sports or bike riding for the rest of the day. A responsible adult should supervise the child for the rest of the day. They can resume normal activities the following day.

Care of your child after treatment

For the remainder of the day your child should:

- Avoid hot food/drinks as the area will be numb for several hours.
- Avoid spitting/rinsing out the mouth for at least 24 hours
- Take painkillers before the numbness has worn off, as the area will be tender.

After 24 hours your child should:

- If your child can tolerate - Rinse their mouth with warm salty water (one teaspoon of salt per tumbler) for several minutes. This will speed up the healing, ease any soreness and help keep the mouth clean. Use the salt water mouthwash as often as you can over the next week, especially after meals.
- Brush the teeth gently.
- Stay hydrated! Drink plenty of cool fluids.

- Eat soft foods.

- Keep away from the area which has been operated on e.g. Don’t put the tongue in tooth socket (A tooth socket is the area of gum where the tooth would have been before it was taken out)

If bleeding/swelling occurs:

- Don’t panic sit your child down.

- Roll up a clean cloth or handkerchief, place over the tooth socket and ask the child to bite down hard for 15 to 20 minutes.

- Remove cloth/handkerchief and the bleeding should have stopped. If not repeat for another 15 to 20 minutes.

- If bleeding still persists contact the Maxillo Facial Unit

- Use ice-packs if swelling occurs.

- For a few days after the surgical procedure, you may notice blood on their pillow when they wake up in the morning. This is normal and you may like to use an old towel to protect their pillow case.



Version number: **2**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

All rights reserved © 2026
WWL Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust