

## Keeping You Calm

### *Types of Sedation*

Sedation is a process by which medication helps you relax while your periodontist provides care. In most types of sedation, you will stay awake and remain calm. In some cases, you may not remember much about your treatment. Depending on the extent of the procedure you're undergoing and your level of nervousness, your periodontist may choose to administer mild or moderate sedation. He or she will also monitor you throughout the treatment to ensure your safety.

The following are some common types of dental sedation:

- **Inhalation sedation:** Commonly known as "laughing gas," nitrous oxide is a colorless and odorless gas that is combined with oxygen and dispensed through a mask placed over your nose. It is considered the mildest form of sedation and is known to relax patients and even put them in a pleasant, dreamy state. Nitrous oxide will not put you to sleep, and the amount you receive can be controlled by your periodontist. You'll remain cognizant enough to communicate, and the gas' effects wear off minutes after inhalation stops.
- **Oral sedation:** Your periodontist may prescribe a medication to relieve any anxiety you may feel during your appointment. Taken about an hour before your visit, the pill may make you a bit drowsy depending on the dose. While you're likely to remain alert enough to follow simple commands, you can be awakened easily if you fall asleep. In some cases, your periodontist may instruct you to take a pill the night before to help you get a good night's rest ahead of your visit. Because the medication may take time to wear off, your periodontist will ask that you do not drive or operate any machinery for 24 hours after receiving oral sedation.
- **Intravenous (IV) sedation:** Sedative medicine is administered directly to the bloodstream (intravenously). This type of moderate sedation works quickly, and your periodontist can continually adjust the level of medication based on your needs. You will remain awake, though you may be sleepy or groggy. Although you will be more alert after your procedure, you may not remember much about it. Because the medication may take time to wear off, your periodontist will ask that you do not drive or operate any machinery for 24 hours after receiving IV sedation.

## Keeping You Comfortable

### *Local Anesthesia*

Local anesthesia enables you to remain pain-free while your periodontist performs both simple and complex treatments. It can be used separately or in tandem with sedation. Your periodontist will likely use local anesthesia to numb your gums, teeth, and the inside of your cheek.

First, he or she may apply a numbing gel on your gums. After a few minutes, your periodontist will inject a local anesthetic where the numbing gel was applied. Because of the numbing gel, you should feel very little to no discomfort at all when the anesthetic is administered. Shortly afterward, you will temporarily lose sensation in the area of your mouth where you're receiving treatment, and your periodontist will ensure that you are completely numb before beginning the procedure. Numbness will persist throughout your appointment and maybe for a few hours afterward.

## Keeping You Safe

### *Determining Whether Sedation and Anesthesia are Right for You*

Sedation and anesthesia are safe and effective when provided by a trained professional such as your periodontist. Before undergoing any type of sedation or anesthesia, your periodontist will assess your medical history and ask about any medications you're taking to determine which methods of anxiety relief and/or pain relief is right for you. Some forms of anesthesia may require that you avoid eating or drinking to reduce the likelihood of side effects. Your periodontist will provide you with detailed instructions on how to prepare for your visit.



## Overview

If you tense up at the thought of visiting your periodontist, you're not alone. Dental anxiety—whether rooted in a fear of discomfort or a sense of helplessness during a procedure—is common in many patients. Some individuals avoid dental visits altogether, putting their teeth and gums at risk. But there's no reason to worry— with the use of certain medications and procedures, your periodontist is equipped to keep you calm and comfortable during your treatment.



## Periodontists: Specialists in Periodontal Disease Care

A periodontist is a dentist who specializes in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of periodontal disease and in the placement of dental implants.

With three additional years of training after dental school, periodontists have mastered the surgical skills necessary to provide successful periodontal disease management. They are also trained to provide sedation and anesthesia during treatment.



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# Calm and Comfortable

## A Patient's Guide to Sedation and Anesthesia for Periodontal Procedures

