



Twilight sedation

“Twilight sedation”, also referred to as “IV sedation”, “conscious sedation” or “sleep dentistry”, uses a combination of sedatives and pain relief to create a drowsy, dream-like state of calm. The following information describes the process, suitability, results and risks of having dental procedures completed under twilight sedation.



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What is twilight sedation?

Twilight sedation is an advanced form of dental sedation that uses a combination of sedative and pain relieving drugs intravenously (via IV) to create a drowsy and dream-like state of deep relaxation for the entire duration of your dental procedure. Twilight sedation is safer than general anaesthesia and is not designed to make you unconscious. In fact, the dental team will still be able to communicate with you. Most patients, however, have no recollection of the appointment.

This modern, safe and highly effective technique will make your visit to the dentist a calm, comfortable and enjoyable experience. The aims of sedation are:

- Pain relief
- Amnesia (unable to recollect events)
- Sedation (sleepiness)

A fully qualified specialist will be at your side for the entire duration of your appointment, monitoring you with state of the art equipment.

Is twilight sedation right for me?

Twilight sedation is suitable for most people, especially for those who have a dental phobia, strong gag reflex or dislike the sounds and vibrations of dental equipment. Children may also benefit from twilight sedation.

What to expect

Pre-anaesthetic consultation: You will be introduced to your sedation specialist who will go through some important aspects of your medical history, your surgical history, any allergies and whether you have any special needs such as pregnancy or breastfeeding. You will also be given instructions to prepare you for the sedation procedure. This is your opportunity to ask any last questions regarding sedation that you need to clarify.

Twilight sedation process: Small doses of medication will be administered at regular intervals during the appointment. Sedative medications will be given by intravenous injection into a cannula that will be placed in your arm/hand prior to the procedure. This is one of the reasons why sedation is very safe; at all times you are breathing and maintaining your blood pressure on your own. During the procedure, you will most likely be very drowsy; however enough sedation will be given to keep you comfortable. Oxygen will be given through nasal prongs, which will flow through the nostrils but still allow the dentist/oral surgeon access to your mouth. A fully qualified specialist will safely monitor you during and after the procedure until it is safe for you to be cared for by the nursing staff.

Getting home: After a brief recovery period (approx. one hour), you can usually go straight home. You must not drive a vehicle within 12 hours after the sedation. Please arrange for a responsible adult, such as a friend or relative, to collect you after your appointment. It is not permissible to walk home (even if it is close by) or catch public transport. You may only get a taxi/Uber home if you are accompanied by a responsible adult (not the Taxi Driver!).

After your appointment: It is recommended that a responsible adult stay with you at home for the first few hours. It is important that you do not drive a motor vehicle, operate machinery, drink alcohol, sign any important documents, make important decisions or undertake in any potentially harmful activities in the following 24 hours after your appointment. Smoking should also be avoided. Some people may be nauseous following discharge. You may also feel tired and dizzy within the initial 24-hour period following sedation, this is normal and rest is encouraged. After sedation, you should drink fluids as soon as you get home. This will improve the dizziness. You should eat as soon as you can but your surgeon should direct the types of foods.

Potential risks: Although very safe, sedation is not without potential risks:

- Nausea/vomiting: Rare
- Dizziness/tiredness: Relatively common
- Aspiration of gastric contents: Very rare, which sometimes can lead to severe lung infection/inflammation
- Allergic reaction/Anaphylaxis: Rare
- Cannula inflammation/infection: Rare