

NITROUS OXIDE INFORMED CONSENT

Nitrous oxide, commonly called "laughing gas," is a breathable gas that has been used since the early 1800 to relieve pain and anxiety during dental procedures. Nitrous oxide is a nonaddictive colorless gas with a slightly sweet taste and odor. You inhale nitrous oxide, which is mixed with oxygen, through a soft nosepiece or mask, which is attached by hoses to the nitrous oxide and oxygen tanks. The gas starts to work in three to five minutes.

In most people, nitrous oxide produces a sense of security, a feeling of warmth, and a pleasant, floating sensation. You may also feel some or all of the following:

- Tingling in your hands and feet
- A feeling of numbness in your thighs, tongue, feet, or hands
- A feeling of heaviness or lightness
- Changes in the way you hear sounds (everything sounds far away)
- Sleepiness
- Euphoria (a sense that everything is wonderful)
- Nausea and sweating

Nitrous oxide is very safe. The patient keeps all natural reflexes when breathing nitrous oxide. In general, you will be relaxed and cooperative. However, about 15 percent of people who receive nitrous oxide experience side effects, including headache, nausea or vomiting. Accordingly, it is best for the patient not to have a full stomach prior to using nitrous oxide. Other possible side effects include excessive sweating and shivering. You should tell your dentist immediately about any discomfort you feel or concerns you have while receiving nitrous oxide. Your dentist will turn off the nitrous oxide and allow you to breathe pure oxygen for up to five minutes.

The effects of the nitrous oxide wear off as oxygen flushes the gas from your lungs. You won't feel any aftereffects once nitrous oxide completely leaves your system. You will feel normal and alert once the mask has been removed. However, some studies have shown that motor skills and attention can be affected for as long as 15 minutes after you stop breathing the gas. If you leave the dental office sooner than that, you should ask your dentist if you should drive. If you have a stuffy nose or a respiratory obstruction, you should not receive nitrous oxide. The gas enters your lungs through your nasal passages, so these must be clear for the gas to work. Nitrous oxide also is not recommended in people with emphysema, bronchitis or chronic obstructive-pulmonary disease.

Nitrous oxide is safe for use in children, but not all children are candidates to use it. Nitrous oxide, for instance, may not be effective for children with severe anxiety, extensive treatment needs, nasal congestion or who experience a discomfort wearing a nasal mask. In these children it may be necessary to use other sedation methods, patient restraint, general anesthesia or a combination of these methods to treat the child's dental needs.

I consent to the use of nitrous oxide. By signing below, you acknowledge that you have received adequate information about the proposed treatment, that you understand this information and that all of your questions have been answered fully.

Patient's Name

Patient's, Parent's or Guardian's Signature

Date