**Nitrous Oxide Instructions**

# What to expect

Nitrous Oxide is a gas, commonly known as ‘happy gas’. It helps to lower anxiety levels and is used to help you feel comfortable and relaxed before dental treatment. Some people will feel tingly, floaty or euphoric (“high”). For some people, it will also reduce pain.

The gas will be given to you in combination with oxygen via a mask placed over your nose. The mask does not cover your mouth. The gas flows through the mask and helps you to relax, then wears off gradually. Your dentist or specialist will use a pulse oximeter which clips onto your finger to monitor your heart rate and oxygen levels.

People can react differently to the same amount of nitrous oxide. The dentist will increase and decrease the level of gas slowly, and they will talk to you to determine how relaxed you are. You may be given 100% oxygen before and after the procedure to assist recovery.

Most people will feel back to normal 5 minutes after the gas is stopped, however some people may feel a bit sleepy, disoriented or clumsy. You will not be discharged until you have recovered.

# Before your treatment

* Do not eat a heavy meal before you are given Nitrous Oxide
* Stop eating and drinking at least 2 hours before your treatment
* A responsible adult must be with you for your appointment to ensure you get home safely

# After your treatment

* A responsible adult should look after you for at least 8 hours after your treatment
* Avoid heavy meals for at least 3 hours
* Some patients may feel nauseous after their treatment. If you do feel unwell try:
* Drinking some water
* Sucking on an ice block
* Eating some clear soup.
* If you have vomiting, difficulty breathing, or feel unwell for a long time after your treatment, please visit your local doctor or emergency department.

# During your treatment

* You will only be given a dose of Nitrous Oxide once you are in the dental chair.
* The gas will help you relax and might even make you a little sleepy.
* You will still be aware of things happening around you, although you may not remember everything that happens during the treatment.
* We will monitor you closely throughout your appointment and make sure you are still comfortable and relaxed.
* Your breathing will be monitored closely and if needed, you will be given oxygen through your mask.
* A local anaesthetic might be used as well as the gas in some cases.

# Side effects

The majority of people have a very positive experience using nitrous oxide, however in some people it will have less effect or cause agitation.

Other short-term side effects can include nausea, and vomiting, dizziness, headache, fatigue, shivering and sweating. Some people also experience hallucinations or distortions in sound. Some people will have difficulty remembering what happened during the procedure. We will stop the nitrous oxide if you start to feel uncomfortable.

Allergic reactions are also possible.

Nitrous oxide should be avoided in people who:

* are unable to communicate with the dentist
* use marijuana or hallucinogenic drugs
* are malnourished or have a condition that affects vitamin B12 or folate synthesis, metabolism or storage
* have a respiratory infection or blocked nose
* have a chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (e.g. emphysema, chronic bronchitis), pulmonary hypertension, pneumothorax or cystic fibrosis
* have had retinal surgery in the past 3 months
* have a history of middle ear surgery or a current blocked middle ear
* have a condition that causes increased intracranial pressure or a bowel obstruction
* have a history of taking Bleomycin

Nitrous oxide needs to be used cautiously in people who are pregnant, have multiple sclerosis or immune compromising conditions.

It is not contraindicated in people who have asthma unless they are having an asthma attack.