

Nitrous oxide for sedation

Your child is scheduled for a:

at Children's Hospitals and Clinics.

Date _____

Time _____

Department _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Please bring a list of your child's medicines and your insurance card with you.

Your child must hold very still during this procedure in order to get the best results. Since most young children are not able to be still enough when they are awake, they are given a medicine that can help them relax. This medicine is called sedation.

If eating and drinking restrictions are needed, a nurse will call you. Otherwise, your child may eat a light snack, such as toast and juice. These restrictions are to help prevent nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up).

What is nitrous oxide?

Nitrous oxide is a very quick-acting inhaled sedation medicine that decreases discomfort and anxiety. It is sometimes called laughing gas, and is often given at the dentist's office. As with all medicines, there are benefits, side effects, and risks. Be sure to discuss any questions with the doctor or nurse.

How is it given?

Your child will inhale the medicine through a mask, breathing in and out normally through the nose and mouth. Your child can pick the smell of the mask, such as bubble gum or strawberry. Sometimes, younger children resist the mask. If this happens, the nurse may gently help hold the mask in place.

The nitrous oxide will make your child feel relaxed and sleepy. It does not cause a deep sleep, as general anesthesia does. It will be given a few minutes before the procedure starts and may continue until it is finished.

For safety during sedation, a nurse will monitor your child until the medicine has worn off.

What are the side effects?

Nitrous oxide is safe for use in children and there are no long-term side effects. These side effects may occur for a short time:

- headache
- nausea
- vomiting

What can I expect after the nitrous oxide is stopped?

Oxygen will be given to your child for a short time after the nitrous oxide is turned off. The effects of nitrous oxide wear off quickly. Usually, children wake up comfortably. Sometimes they may be a little disoriented and irritable, but this usually lasts only a very short time.

A nurse will monitor your child until the medicine has worn off. If your child is an outpatient, you must stay with him or her. Your child may eat right away unless there is a reason not to, such as another test. Once home, your child may go back to regular activities.

How can I help my child?

You are welcome to stay in the room while your child is receiving the nitrous oxide. For some procedures, you may be able to stay the entire time. Your child may find your presence during procedures helpful. Pregnant women are not allowed in the room because of an extremely rare but possible risk to the baby.

Reassure and explain to your child in simple words what is being done and why. Always tell the truth. Remain calm; the more relaxed you and your child are, the easier the test will be. We are here to help **both** your child and you.

When should I call the doctor?

- questions about the procedure or results
- vomiting more than twice
- **extreme** irritability
- trouble arousing your child
- signs of allergic reaction:
 - fever or chills
 - rash or hives
 - wheezing
 - trouble breathing - **call 911**

What else do I need to know?

All children are different. Nitrous oxide does not work for everyone. The nurse and doctor will discuss other sedation options with you if the procedure cannot be completed with nitrous oxide.

You may be asked to sign a consent form for some procedures.

Questions?

If you have questions about your child's sedation, call the please call the number listed on the front of this sheet.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: www.childrensmn.org.

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