

Can I cope with “The injection in the gum”?

No one likes having dental treatment but many of us manage to accept our dentistry with the help of an injection in the gum, (local anaesthetic). Some of us however require alternative methods of pain and anxiety control. There are a number of these, which can be used either on their own, or in conjunction with the familiar local anaesthetic. Your dentist will understand your anxieties and will be pleased to discuss your options.

General anaesthesia is now largely confined to the hospital environment. There are still a small number of patients, especially children, but also some adults, where the treatment is best provided under a general anaesthetic and for whom appropriate referral to hospital is justified.

To replace general anaesthesia there is a range of safer modern alternatives. The range extends from tender loving care right through to conscious sedation provided by your dentist giving an injection in your arm or hand.

Oral sedation, inhalational sedation and the injection in the arm are the more commonly used techniques but may dentists can produce good results using hypnosis or acupuncture either alone or in conjunction with other treatment methods. Should you feel that these alternatives are for you, talk to your dentist.

Will Oral Sedation help?



Oral sedatives are taken by mouth in the form of tablets, capsules or liquids.

These drugs can either be used to relax you before your trip to the dentist (pre-medication) or act as a sedative to help you when you are having treatment.

Your dentist will need to know about your general health and about any current medication you are taking.

Is Inhalational Sedation for me?

In this method of sedation you breathe a mixture of special gases which act

to relax you. The most common combination is nitrous oxide and oxygen which is also known by other names like "gas and air", "Entonox" or "Relative Analgesia".

This technique is very safe with a rapid recovery time and is good for adults but is especially to treating anxious children.

The mixture of gases is delivered through a small comfortable nosepiece, which is positioned to cover the nose and not the mouth.



A specially designed machine delivers the gases and can be adjusted by your dentist in response to your needs. You may experience a warm tingly feeling which allows you more easily to accept the dental treatment.

There are of course requirements both before and after treatment with

inhalational sedation and the instructions given by your dentist should be strictly obeyed. Your dentist will need to know about your general health and will require details of any current medication you are taking.

Do I need an injection in the arm?

With this method of conscious sedation the sedative drugs are administered by an injection into a vein in your arm or in the back of your hand. Your dentist will usually use only one drug, but may in some circumstances use a combination of drugs to sedate you to the required state. The onset of sedation is rapid and precise. Although you will remain in verbal contact with your dentist you may well remember very little about your treatment. This technique of conscious sedation is very different from a general anaesthetic where you are fully unconscious.

Recovery after this technique of sedation is slow and you will certainly not be able to leave the premises until advised by your dentist. You will be required to bring a responsible able-bodied adult with you to escort you home. You may feel sleepy and be irresponsible afterwards and your

escort must be able to give undivided attention until you are safely resting at home. There will be a need for supervision for the rest of the day and amongst other instructions you must not drive, operate machinery or make serious decisions. The following day you should be fit to resume your normal activities.

This technique is very popular with patients and is used to overcome the fear of dentistry. It offers a safer powerful alternative to general anaesthesia. Your dentist will need to know about your general health and medication in order to assess your suitability for this technique.

Transmucosal Sedation

Here a tiny amount of concentrated drug is sniffed. The effects are similar to oral sedation but the drug acts more quickly. It is a good alternative to intravenous sedation for some children and those with a fear of injections. It can be used in combination with intravenous sedation.

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