

ANESTHESIA ORAL SURGERY

Anesthesia literally means without sensation or feeling. In contemporary oral and maxillofacial surgery, it signifies the many ways your oral surgery can be made safer and more comfortable. This information is prepared to help you understand the types of anesthesia available in the office so you can make an informed choice for your oral surgery procedure.

Types of Anesthesia

1. **Local Anesthesia** – Medication is injected at the general area of the operative site. Its effect is to block the sensation from the area, rendering it “numb.” It’s the type of anesthesia that is often given by dentists for routine fillings. Because this technique does not cause drowsiness, you are aware of your surroundings as usual and are permitted to drive afterwards.
2. **Inhalation Sedation** – (also called light or conscious sedation or nitrous oxide sedation) – Nitrous oxide, “laughing gas,” is given in combination with oxygen through a nasal mask for you to breathe. Its effect is to cause slight drowsiness, a relaxed, calm, and comfortable feeling and to reduce pain. Local anesthesia is then given, usually with less discomfort. Because the effects of the nitrous oxide wear off rapidly after it is discontinued, usually there are no restriction against driving afterwards.
3. **Oral Conscious Sedation** – And oral medication is given in the office in order to relax you for the surgery. This is often used together with Nitrous oxide and local anesthesia is also given after sedation is achieved and is easier for patients to tolerate. You are monitored here in the office for an hour prior to the surgery and during the procedure to ensure safety and comfort.

4. **Intravenous Sedation** - (also called deep sedation, or IV sedation) – Various medications are given by injection directly into an arm or hand vein. The effect is very rapid to cause significant drowsiness, relaxation, reduced awareness of and concern about surroundings, and amnesia. Nitrous oxide and oxygen are usually given before the IV injection to maximize comfort and safety, and oxygen is continued throughout the procedure. Local anesthesia is also given after sedation is achieved, and most patients aren't aware of and don't remember getting these injections. Sophisticated monitoring of each patient's status is constantly done throughout the procedure.

5. **General Anesthesia** – (also called ultra-light general anesthesia, IV anesthesia, or "twilight sleep") – In the office setting, this procedure is very similar to that described for IV sedation, but higher doses and sometimes different or additional medications are used. Also, for younger children, the general anesthetic is begun by breathing rather than by IV injection. The effect is technically a true general anesthetic, but it is not as deep as hospital general anesthesia. A major advantage of this type of anesthesia is our ability to rapidly adjust its depth to "customize" the effect for each patient. Most patients do so well they don't need total anesthesia for the entire surgical procedure. Again, sophisticated monitoring of each patient's status is constantly done throughout the procedure.

It is very important for this type of anesthesia that you NOT eat or drink any food or liquid (not even water) after midnight before your procedure. Also, a responsible adult driver MUST accompany you to the office, remain at the office while you are here, and drive you directly home after your recovery period. All these measures are taken to maximize your safety.

After Anesthesia for Oral Surgery

Since all forms of office anesthesia involve use of local anesthesia, parts of your mouth will be numb after you leave the office. Often, longer acting agents are selected to provide numbness and pain relief for many hours. Do not chew any food until after the numbness has worn off and the feeling has returned so you don't bite your tongue or lip by accident.

Oral conscious sedation, IV sedation and general anesthesia require a short period of time in our recovery area after the procedure before you are discharged. The adult driver accompanying you will be with you during this recovery time. You must NOT drive or operate any dangerous equipment for at least 24 hours after taking these types of anesthesia, and until after you are no longer taking any prescription narcotic pain medication.

What about Risk?

As with all surgical and anesthetic procedures, some risk is involved. The deeper the anesthesia, the greater the risk. Generally, with today's techniques the margin of safety is very high.

Complications of local anesthesia and inhalation sedation are very rare and are usually not serious.

Complications associated with OSC, IV sedation and with general anesthesia are very uncommon, but potentially can be serious. Generally, the most serious complications, including death, rarely occur. Mild episodes of nausea, vomiting, disorientation, and amnesia may occur, but are less likely than with hospital anesthesia.

The doctor will discuss your anesthesia with you. Please ask ANY question you may have so you can make an informed choice about anesthesia.