

## **DENTAL TREATMENT FOR ANXIOUS PATIENTS**

- ❖ There is a range of methods to control pain and anxiety available to make dentistry easier.
- ❖ Discuss your fears and anxieties with the dental team.
- ❖ General anaesthesia is rarely needed because of safer alternatives.
- ❖ To ensure your safety it is important to follow all instructions before and after your treatment.

### **Why do I need sedation?**

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). However some of us require additional methods of pain and anxiety control. There are a number of these which can be used either on their own or with a local anaesthetic. Your dentist will understand your anxieties and will be pleased to discuss your options.

General anaesthesia is now only available in a hospital. There are still a number of patients, especially children and some adults where treatment is better provided under a general anaesthetic and for whom referral to a hospital is appropriate.

### **What is conscious sedation?**

Conscious sedation techniques are a way of making anxious people feel more relaxed about receiving dental care. There are several techniques to help you overcome your fears and anxieties. Not all are suitable for everyone. The dentist who sees you at your assessment appointment will discuss the different options and help you decide which is best for you. Oral, inhalational and intravenous sedation are the more commonly used techniques.

### **What are the benefits of sedation?**

Conscious sedation will help you cope with dental treatment and lower your anxiety. Even people who do not feel anxious about dental treatment choose to have conscious sedation for uncomfortable procedures such as extractions (having teeth removed).

## **What are the risks?**

Conscious sedation using gas and air is very safe. You may feel dizzy or light headed at the end of treatment but this should only last a few minutes. We will give you pure oxygen to breath at the end of treatment to help prevent this. Intravenous sedation and intranasal sedation can slow down your breathing. We overcome this by monitoring you carefully, so we can give you oxygen if you need it. You may have some bruising to your hand or arm after the injection, but this should heal quickly.

## **What treatment options are available?**

### **Oral Sedation**

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 visit to the dentist (premedication) or as a sedative to help you when you are having your dental treatment. Both adults and children receiving treatment under oral sedation must be accompanied by a responsible adult who can give the patient their undivided attention both before and for the rest of the day after treatment. Your dentist will need to know about your general health and about any current medication.

### **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 suited 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, floating 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 followed. Your dentist will need to know about your general health and will require details of any current medication you are taking.

### **What is intravenous sedation?**

With this method of conscious sedation the sedative drugs are administered by an injection into your arm or in the back of your hand. The onset of sedation is rapid and precise. The sedative makes you feel deeply relaxed. You will be able to talk and cooperate with your dental team, but most people cannot remember much about their treatment. Before the sedation, your blood pressure will be measured and during treatment your breathing and pulse will be monitored. Some people take a little time to recover and you will need to stay in the

practice until you are able to walk by yourself. It is important that you have someone with you who can take you home and stay with you for the rest of the day.

This technique is popular with patients and is used to overcome the fear of dentistry. It offers a safer 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.