

University Dental Hospital of Manchester

## Information for Patients

# Oral Sedation for Dental Treatment

Oral sedation is only offered to support intravenous (IV) sedation. This leaflet is only to discuss oral sedation. You will be given a separate set of instructions about intravenous sedation in addition to this leaflet.

## What is oral sedation?

Oral sedation is sedation given by mouth in the form of a drink or by a syringe of medicine (called midazolam) being given that is swallowed. It is a safe and effective method of treating patients who are nervous or frightened about dental treatment and who are anxious of the placement of cannulas (small plastic tubes placed in the hand or arm with a needle). It is also helpful for patients with special care needs, such as those with severe learning disabilities and movement disorders, who may otherwise be unable to receive with dental treatment.

It usually relaxes the patient and may make them feel drowsy. It can be quite slow to take effect, sometimes taking thirty minutes or more to start to relax somebody. The time it takes to relax somebody is very variable. Once the sedative drug has taken effect, a cannula (small plastic tube) is inserted into a vein using a small needle. The needle is then removed with the plastic tube staying in place for the duration of the visit. Within reason, more of the same sedative drug can then be given through the vein if needed.

The patient will remain conscious throughout the procedure, but the drug causes temporary amnesia (loss of memory for about an hour). Although this varies from person to person, many patients do not remember having their treatment. Due to the working time of sedation, many patients need to have treatment carried out over several appointments.

## What are the benefits of oral sedation?

Oral sedation can help people accept treatment by relaxing them enough to allow a cannula to be placed. This means further IV sedation can be provided if needed.

## What are the risks of oral and IV sedation?

Sometimes oral sedation can be ineffective. The response to the sedation can be unpredictable. Due to its taste, some people do not drink the solution therefore do not become sedated.

Oral and IV sedation can slow down a person's breathing. We monitor this closely and can easily give the patient extra oxygen if necessary.

Occasionally, there may be some bruising around the area where the cannula is inserted.

Sedation may not be successful for a small number of patients. If this is the case, the procedure may be stopped, and the treatment plan will be reviewed.

Small amounts may be secreted in breast milk, but these levels are very small and unlikely to affect a healthy term baby. As a cautionary measure, avoid breast-feeding for 24 hours after administration.

## What are the alternatives to oral sedation?

The alternatives to oral & IV sedation are to have treatment with local anaesthesia (LA), inhalation sedation, intranasal (IN) sedation, and general anaesthesia (GA).

Treatment under LA alone (without sedation) will involve an injection into the person's gum so that there will be no pain, but the patient will still be fully aware of the dental experience.

Inhalation sedation involves breathing in a mixture of gases (nitrous oxide and oxygen) through the nose to relax a patient. This requires a certain level of understanding from the patient to ensure the gas is breathed in and out properly.

Intranasal sedation can be given instead of oral sedation: this involves spraying some sedation solution into a person's nose. This can help those who struggle to wait for oral sedation to work or who may not swallow the oral sedation solution.

General anaesthetic involves 'going to sleep' (being fully unconscious) for treatment in an operating theatre.

Individual suitability for any of these approaches varies from patient to patient, and from one treatment requirement to another. This is not possible for every type of treatment that can be completed with sedation or local anaesthesia: some treatments cannot normally be offered under general anaesthesia such as root canal treatment or simple fillings.

## Unlicensed medication use

Oral midazolam is an 'Unlicensed' medicine. This means there is not a licensed form of this medication for oral sedation use for dental procedures. The medicine used has been especially formulated to be used by this route. It is being used in a different way, by a different route or for a different reason to its licenced form. Dentists and doctors are allowed to use medicines in this way when they feel it is suitable, safe and likely to be effective. It does mean that the medicine may not have been studied for use in this way in the same way as other medicines for other patient groups, although there may be some evidence of its use in this way.

## Contact Details

If you have any queries or questions, please contact University Dental Hospital of Manchester:

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