

Pre-Operative Instructions

The following information is provided to you in response to the most common questions and concerns expressed by our patients. If you don't find the answers provided here to any questions you may have, please make a note and give us the opportunity to address them.

What kind of anesthetic will be used?

1. Local anesthetic- All patients receive local anesthetic for surgical procedures. Local anesthetic is used to make the tissues and teeth feel numb.
2. Nitrous oxide- This is a gas administered through the nose via a "mask" which is placed over the nose. Nitrous oxide relieves anxiety and relaxes the patient. The effects of nitrous oxide are completely reversed by administering oxygen for a few minutes. There are no restrictions to the patient after nitrous oxide.
3. IV Sedation with Versed- This is administered by IV in the patient's arm. Versed provides conscious sedation. The patient can speak and respond to commands, but is very relaxed and usually remembers little or nothing about the procedure performed. Versed takes time to wear off, so patients will not be permitted to drive when they leave the office. No hazardous activities should be attempted for a minimum of eight hours after leaving the office. Drivers are required to return to the office one-half hour prior to the scheduled completion of the procedure.
4. Halcion Pre-Medication- At times a medication will be prescribed to take the night before and an hour before the appointment. This helps relieve anxiety before the procedure. As with the IV medication Versed, the patient may not drive after taking Halcion. Be sure a driver is available to bring the patient and take home in this case.

Special Note: I understand that I cannot drive any vehicle or operate machinery after taking Halcion or IV sedation.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

What should I wear for this procedure?

Wear soft comfortable clothing. If you are going to have IV sedation, be sure to wear something with short sleeves or sleeves that can be pushed up easily without being too tight. If you become too cool during the procedure we have blankets available to keep you comfortable. Please leave your valuable, jewelry, or purse at home or with your driver.

What should I eat before and after the procedure?

If you elect to use IV sedation and are scheduled in the morning, do not have anything to eat or drink after midnight.

(Pre-Operative Continued)

If your procedure is scheduled in the afternoon, do not eat or drink after 7:00am. In either case, you may take any morning medications with a small amount of water. When you leave the office, your mouth will be very numb, so we recommend that you wait for the numbness to wear off before trying to eat.

Most patients tell us soft foods such as noodles, scrambled eggs, cottage cheese and oatmeal are the most easily managed. Let comfort be your guide. Also, avoiding extremes of temperature and spicy foods will keep you more comfortable. Some patients find that drinking through a straw is helpful (as long as there has not been any extractions).

Is it okay to smoke?

Smoking should be avoided as long as possible, but definitely during the first twenty-four hours. Patients who smoke tend to have more tenderness and heal more slowly, especially in the palate.

Will there be much swelling or bruising?

The majority of patients have little or no swelling or bruising. If this should occur, it will probably be on the third day. Icing the area the day of surgery can help control this.

How much discomfort will I have?

Most patient experience minimal discomfort, you will probably be given a prescription for pain medication. The discomfort can usually be managed with Ibuprofen (your doctor will tell you what dosage is appropriate for you).

How long will the dressing and stitches be in my mouth?

When the procedure is completed, a bubble-gum like material will be placed over the surgical area. It may come loose in an hour or a week or anytime in between. Whatever happens is no cause for concern. The sutures will usually dissolve in one to two weeks after your surgery.

What happens after the initial healing phase?

Another appointment will be scheduled for you with the hygienist. She will clean your teeth and review oral hygiene instructions. In most cases, gum surgery changes the gum line and can create new spaces between the teeth. The hygienist will provide you with instructions and tools to help clean in those areas.

Am I cured?

In a word- NO. Periodontal disease is a chronic disease that cannot be cured, only controlled. You are an important member of the health care team who will manage and maintain your good health. Other members of the team include your general dentist, the periodontist, and the hygienist. It is essential that you follow the recommendations of the health care professionals in terms of frequency of visits and home care.

You have made a considerable investment, in terms of time and money, in achieving good oral health. If your investment is not protected by regular maintenance appointments here and with your general dentist, your investment could be lost.