

Nitrous Oxide

What is Nitrous Oxide?

Nitrous Oxide (NO, Laughing Gas) is a colorless, slightly sweet-smelling gas that is introduced through a nasal mask. It works as you breathe it in through your nose. It has been used in dentistry for over 100 years.

Is it safe?

The most common response for most people is... " I'm aware of what is going on, but it does not bother me". Sometimes there is an accompanying tingling in the hands and feet. In the controlled use during a dental procedure it produces a slightly euphoric effect, similar to that produced by Valium, or a cocktail. It is probably the most controllable, reliable and predictable of the moderately effective light sedation agents.

Will it eliminate "the shot"?

For complete pain control it is usually necessary to use a local anesthetic in conjunction with nitrous oxide. However, NO also makes the injection much more comfortable.

How much is used?

Each person is comfortable at different levels of NO, which is what we determine at the initial first visit. A few people just end up not liking it for one reason or another, but for those people who do use it; it can literally make a world of difference in their comfort and perception of dentistry.

Do I need it? Do you recommend it?

Nobody absolutely needs it although it makes the visit so much more comfortable that we almost routinely use it for fillings and other work on children (3-10 yrs). I recommend everyone try NO if they have any apprehension whatsoever about having dental work done. Why be uncomfortable if something so safe and easy is available? It is simply an extension of local anesthetic; anything that can make your experience more comfortable is what we are interested in providing for you.

Are there any after effects?

The effects wear off as soon as you stop breathing the nitrous oxide and most people are completely back to normal responses within 1-5 minutes. Some people report a lingering effect, but that is most likely just due to the total relaxation some people feel under Nitrous Oxide. There are no long-term effects unless you are exposed to it frequently over an extended period of time.

Is it expensive?

The charge in our office is \$66, regardless of how long we use it. Most insurance companies do not cover this charge.