

WHAT IS CONSCIOUS SEDATION?

This type of sedation induces an altered state of consciousness that minimizes pain and discomfort through the use of pain relievers and sedatives. Patients, who receive conscious sedation usually are able to speak and respond to verbal cues throughout the procedure, communicating any discomfort they experience to the provider. A brief period of amnesia may erase any memory of the procedure.

WHO CAN ADMINISTER CONSCIOUS SEDATION?

Conscious sedation is extremely safe when administered by qualified providers. Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), anesthesiologists, other physicians, dentists, and oral surgeons are qualified providers of conscious sedation. Specifically trained Registered Nurses may assist in the administration of conscious sedation.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF CONSCIOUS SEDATION?

A brief period of amnesia after the procedure may follow the administration of conscious sedation. Occasional side effects may include headache, hangover, nausea and vomiting or unpleasant memories of the surgical experience.

WHAT PATIENTS SHOULD EXPECT.

Conscious sedation provides a safe and effective option for patients undergoing minor surgeries or diagnostic procedures. It is recommended that a family member or friend accompany the patient and stay with the patient immediately following conscious sedation. The number and type of procedures that can be performed using conscious sedation have increased significantly as a result of new technology and state of the art medications. Conscious sedation allows patients to recover quickly and resume normal daily activities in a short period of time.

WHAT SHOULD PATIENTS EXPECT IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE SURGICAL OR DIAGNOSTIC PROCEDURE?

A qualified provider monitors the patient immediately following the procedure. Written postoperative care instructions should be given to the patient to take home. Patients should not drive a vehicle, operate dangerous equipment or make any important decisions for at least 24 hours after receiving conscious sedation. A follow-up phone call usually is made by the healthcare provider to check on the patient's condition and answer any remaining questions.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT CONSCIOUS SEDATION.

The following is a list of questions patients should ask prior to the surgical or diagnostic procedure:

- Will a trained and skilled provider be dedicated to monitoring me during conscious sedation?
- Will my provider monitor my breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure?
- Will oxygen be available and will the oxygen content of my blood be monitored?
- Are personnel trained to perform advanced cardiac life support?
- Is emergency resuscitation equipment available on-site and immediately accessible in the event of an emergency?
- Will a trained and skilled provider stay with me during my recovery period and for how long?
- Should a friend or family member take me home?

This information has been supplied by the Council for Public Interest in Anesthesia.

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