

# Dental Anesthesia:

## *What Every Patient Should Know*

The dentists of the **New York State Dental Association (NYSDA)** are committed to providing you with quality care and to making your dental visit as comfortable as possible. New methods and medicines help reduce or eliminate discomfort during dental treatment.

As a result of legislation initiated by NYSDA, **New York State law requires dentists to have a special certificate if they administer general anesthesia, deep sedation or conscious sedation.** These dentists have advanced training in general anesthesia and management of emergencies. New York requires that these dentists have highly specialized monitoring equipment to assure your safety and comfort.

### Talk To Your Dentist...

➤ If you have questions about your oral health care, talk to your dentist.

➤ It's important to understand the risks and benefits of the dental treatment that is right for you.

➤ If you still have concerns, consider getting a second opinion.

➤ Working together, you and your dentist can make your dental visit as safe and comfortable as possible.

#### AT THE DENTAL OFFICE:

##### Topical Medication

- Your dentist may apply topical medicine with a swab to make your gums numb before injecting local anesthesia (Novocain). Topical medications also are used to soothe painful mouth sores.

##### Local Anesthesia (Injected in your gums)

- Local anesthesia, like Novocain, prevents discomfort in an area of your mouth during treatment. It causes temporary numbness which can feel like a "fat lip." Dentists usually inject local anesthesia before drilling a cavity or crown preparation, before oral surgery and extractions, root canal or treatment for gum disease.

##### Sedation and General Anesthesia (Sleep)

- Nitrous oxide (sweet air) may be used with local anesthesia to help patients relax during dental visits.
- In order to treat more anxious patients, sedatives may be given by mouth.
- "Conscious sedation," "deep sedation" or general anesthesia (sleep) may be recommended for patients who are very fearful or have a hard time controlling their movements or for some complex treatment.

#### AT HOME:

##### Over-the-Counter Drugs

- Common over-the-counter drugs help relieve toothache or pain after dental treatment: aspirin, acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) such as Ibuprofen (Advil®).

##### Prescriptions

- When needed, your dentist may prescribe a drug to control pain. Narcotic analgesics, such as those containing codeine or other drugs, can be prescribed to control more severe pain.

### ► Take an Active Role

Dentists safely treat millions of children and adults every year. Taking any drug or medicine has some risks. To help protect your health and safety, be sure to tell your dentist about:

- **changes in your health since your last visit**
- **ALL drugs and medicines you take**
- **your illnesses or health conditions**
- **all your allergies and reactions to medications**

**Always follow directions given by your dentist carefully.**

*For additional questions about this and other oral health care topics, call:*



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