

FREDERICK PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY
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Nitrous Oxide (Laughing Gas) Pre-Appointment Instructions

Why Does My Child Need Laughing Gas?

Your child's safety and comfort is of our highest priority. Your dentist has recommended nitrous oxide (laughing gas) therapy for your child during his/her treatment. Nitrous oxide is a very safe gas that has been used by dentists and physicians for over 150 years. It is a gas/oxygen mixture that is inhaled by a nasal mask and takes effect after about 5 minutes.

Nitrous oxide has many benefits, including relaxation, anxiety reduction, and increased comfort in people who have a strong gag reflex. The use of nitrous oxide can help many children learn to cope with the sometimes-stressful dental experience. Since nitrous oxide generally reduces fatigue and provides a pleasant sensation, it enables children to remain relaxed for their dental treatment.

A local anesthetic ("numbing") will still be used. We find that children are more comfortable if we give them laughing gas for their first numbing experience. Nitrous oxide does not put a child to "sleep;" however, some children will become so relaxed during the treatment that they may fall asleep naturally.

How Should I Prepare My Child for the Appointment?

To help minimize any nausea, we ask that your child not eat or drink anything two hours prior to the appointment.

Will I be permitted to come back in the room with my child?

If you desire, you may be in the room with your child during the appointment. You may hold your child's hand or leg, but it is **very important** that you do not try to engage your child in conversation so the child concentrates on breathing the gas and receives its maximum benefits. **If you are pregnant, some studies have indicated that there is a possibility of premature labor.** We do have equipment that captures scatter nitrous oxide, however, if you have concerns at the appointment regarding this, please feel free to discuss them with us or have another adult attend the appointment.

Will My Child Have Any Side Effects?

Rarely, side effects may include nausea and/or vomiting. If your child has a cold, a fever, or is taking **any** medications, please contact our office prior to the visit. The gas only works while your child breathes it; it is not absorbed into the bloodstream. Your child will be free of any effects from the gas after it is stopped. However, some children may appear withdrawn, sleepy, and unresponsive – this is a natural reaction, much like waking up from a nap.