

Children's Dentistry of Westerly & Wakefield  
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## **Information on the Administration of Nitrous Oxide (“Laughing Gas”)**

At Children's Dentistry of Westerly we utilize many non-pharmacological techniques to help a young child through a difficult visit. Most often these techniques, such as distraction, tell-show-do, or a calm reassuring voice make your child feel relaxed and special and allow us to quickly and efficiently provide care.

Sometimes, however, a child may feel anxious during treatment despite these non-pharmacologic methods. Nitrous oxide/oxygen, or “laughing gas,” is a safe sedative agent that can often be used to calm a child's fear of the dental visit. Additionally, it works well for children whose gag reflex interferes with dental treatment. It does not replace the need for local anesthetic (“Novocain” or “the shot”).

Laughing gas is not right for every child. There is a level of unpredictability with its success. *In other words, it may not work and you should understand this going into the visit.*

### Frequently Asked Questions about Nitrous Oxide:

**Q:** What is nitrous oxide/oxygen?

Nitrous oxide/oxygen (N<sub>2</sub>O-O<sub>2</sub>) is a blend of two gases -- oxygen and nitrous oxide.

**Q:** How is it administered?

A fitted mask is placed over the nose and, as the patient breathes normally, uptake occurs through the lungs. At the end of treatment, it is eliminated after a short period of breathing oxygen and has no lingering effects.

**Q:** How will my child feel when breathing nitrous oxide/oxygen?

Your child will smell a faint, sweet aroma and experience a sense of well-being and relaxation. Since it may produce a feeling of giddiness or euphoria, it is often called "laughing gas." Children sometimes report dreaming and their arms and legs may feel "tingly." It raises the pain threshold and may even make the time appear to pass quickly. If your child is worried by the sights, sounds or sensations of dental treatment, he or she may respond more positively with the use of nitrous oxide/oxygen.

**Q:** How safe is nitrous oxide/oxygen?

Nitrous Oxide is *very safe*. It is perhaps the safest sedative in dentistry and is well tolerated. Nitrous Oxide has a rapid onset, is reversible, and can be adjusted in various concentrations. Your child remains fully conscious and keeps all natural reflexes when breathing Nitrous Oxide/Oxygen. Furthermore, he/she will be capable of responding to a question or request.

**Q:** Will nitrous oxide/oxygen work for all children?

We at Children's Dentistry of Westerly know that all children are not alike. Every service is tailored to your child as an individual. Nitrous oxide/oxygen may not be effective for some children, especially those who have severe anxiety, nasal congestion, or discomfort wearing a nasal mask. We will review your child's medical history, level of anxiety, and dental treatment needs and inform you if nitrous oxide/oxygen is recommended for your child.

If your child is to receive nitrous oxide/oxygen during a visit, the following simple rules should be observed:

- \* Give your child a light meal or no food two hours prior to the visit. A full stomach increases the likelihood of nausea.
- \* Be sure to let us know if your child is experiencing any respiratory condition – this could make administration and absorption of the nitrous oxide/oxygen difficult.
- \* Be sure to let the doctor or assistant know if your child is taking any medication on the day of the appointment.
- \* Be sure to let the doctor or assistant know if your child is prone to motion sickness.

If Nitrous Oxide/Oxygen is recommended for your child and you agree to its use, a *non-refundable \$60* fee will be required prior to scheduling the appointment. This fee is for the delivery and monitoring of Nitrous Oxide/Oxygen during your child's visit.

We schedule a longer appointment when using Nitrous Oxide/Oxygen so that if your child is responding positively to the Nitrous Oxide/Oxygen, the dentist can accomplish additional treatment and thus lessen the number of treatment visits for your child. Due to this large time slot set aside for a Nitrous Oxide/Oxygen appointment, we require *48 hours notice of cancelling/rescheduling the appointment*. The failed appointment fee for a Nitrous Oxide/Oxygen appointment is **\$80**.

It is imperative that we communicate to you what we can and cannot do in terms of providing dental care for your child. We look forward to discussing and answering any questions you might have. Please make sure you are comfortable and well informed before your child's first operative visit. Do not keep your questions to yourself, please ask us; we welcome your feedback.