

Helping our patients achieve good oral health often requires extra measures. A lot of people – as many as half – are anxious about going to the dentist. For patients who have dental anxiety, we offer several options to help you remain completely relaxed during your dental procedures.

Oral Sedation

We can prescribe a drug or a combination of drugs to be taken prior to your appointment to help you relax. Typically, we recommend two different prescriptions.

1. The first is Valium (diazepam) taken by mouth the night prior to your dental appointment. This is a fast-acting and long-lasting benzodiazepine drug that takes effect in most patients within 15 to 60 minutes after ingestion.
2. The second drug is Halcion (triazolam), also taken by mouth. This pill is taken one hour prior to your dental appointment. This drug lasts a much shorter length of time and for that reason is taken closer to the time of the appointment.

Due to the possible side effects of these drugs, you will need a driver for your appointment and are restricted from driving for 24 hours after your appointment. Some patients report drowsiness, dizziness, lightheadedness, etc. Some patients may be prescribed just the triazolam and not the diazepam. Ask Dr. Marion which drugs will work best for you.

Nitrous Oxide

Some patients may need something more than the oral sedation noted above to more fully relax during their dental appointment. For these patients, we offer inhaled minimal sedation. While you are in the dental chair, you will breathe nitrous oxide – sometimes also called laughing gas or happy air – which is mixed with oxygen and delivered through a nose piece you wear throughout the dental procedure. With nitrous oxide, you remain awake but will feel relaxed. Because nitrous wears off quickly, you will be able to drive yourself home after the appointment.

For some patients, certain conditions may reduce the effectiveness of nitrous. These include intoxication or recent alcohol use, recreational or prescription drug use, chronic respiratory conditions, high tolerance to sedatives, or difficulty breathing through the nose. These people may require referral for other sedation techniques.

Let us know if you are interested in learning more about these sedation options. We will need to know ahead of time to prescribe the drug and/or to schedule your appointment to include nitrous.

This information, along with other Guides, can be found at mmSmileCenter.com.