

Conscious (moderate) sedation for adults

This handout explains moderate sedation. If you have questions after reading it, feel free to ask your nurse or doctor.

What is conscious (moderate) sedation?

- ▶ During a procedure, conscious (moderate) sedation, lets you stay awake and aware, without feeling discomfort and without the stronger side effects and dangers of general anesthesia.

The doctor can speak with you and you will be able to respond.

Conscious sedation does not last long, but it may make you drowsy.

Let your doctor know if you have any allergies, especially to Fentanyl, Versed, or Ativan.

How will I receive sedation medications?

- ▶ You will receive medications by vein (intravenously) or by injection into a muscle (intramuscularly). They can also be given by mouth.

Oral medications may take 30 to 60 minutes to take effect. The effects of intravenous medication may be felt immediately.

What are the side effects of sedation?

- ▶ Sedation may slow your breathing, and the nurse may need to give you oxygen to help you breathe.
- ▶ Your blood pressure may be affected, and you may get intravenous fluids to stabilize your blood pressure.
- ▶ Because sedation effects may linger, you may have a headache, nausea, and feel sleepy for several hours.
- ▶ Some people have a brief period of amnesia (not remembering what happened) after receiving conscious sedation.

How do I prepare for sedation?

1 to 2 weeks before your procedure

- ▶ **Inform your doctor immediately if you take anti-inflammatory medications** such as Indomethacin, Daypro, Aleve, Ibuprofen, aspirin or even Pepto Bismol. These medications contain salicylate. Your doctor will let you know if you can take them.
- ▶ **Contact your doctor for specific instructions about your other medications.** You may need to take some of these medications on the day of your procedure.

▶ **If you smoke, we may ask you to stop** the night before your procedure, and not restart until the day after (depending on the procedure).

▶ **You may have restrictions on your diet**; for example no solid foods for 8 to 12 hours before the procedure with sips of water or broth up to 4 hours before the procedure.

Fasting means no eating or drinking, including water.

Check with your doctor or nurse for your specific restrictions.

▶ **Avoid drinking alcohol the night before and day of the procedure.** Alcohol can interact with sedation and pain medications and cause problems for you.

The morning of your procedure:

▶ Your doctor will explain what to expect during the procedure, including its benefits, risks, and recovery period. You will have plenty of time to ask questions. If you agree to the procedure, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

▶ If you are an outpatient, you will be asked to bring a responsible adult to take you home or back to the hotel. This person must be available when you are discharged from the procedure.

▶ You will have a physical examination that includes your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, and respirations). We will also ask you about your medical, surgical, anesthetic and family

histories, and current medications and allergies.

▶ The nurse will start an intravenous catheter (IV). This is a small plastic catheter placed in your vein to administer fluids and medications during the procedure.

▶ You may have blood drawn or be asked to provide a urine specimen.

▶ You may be asked to empty your bladder and change into hospital gown before the procedure.

What happens during the procedure?

▶ A nurse and doctor will stay with you at all times to check your level of drowsiness and your vital signs (pulse, blood pressure, and respiration).

▶ Your vital signs will be checked every 3 to 5 minutes.

▶ Your oxygen level (oxygen saturation) will be checked continuously with a device that clips onto one of your fingers.

▶ You will feel very relaxed and may even begin to sleep, but you will awaken easily and be able to talk with the doctors and nurses.

What happens immediately after the procedure?

▶ A nurse will watch you closely until you recover from the medications.

▶ Your oxygen level will continue to be measured with the device attached to your finger.

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- ▶ A nurse will continue to closely monitor your blood pressure, breathing, and pulse at least every 15 minutes for 1 hour, or until they go back to what they were before the procedure.
 - ▶ If you are an inpatient, you will be taken back to your room when your vital signs are stable.

Note for outpatients:

When can I be discharged?

- ▶ Expect to stay in the Clinical Center 1 to 2 hours after your procedure. The timing of your discharge depends on several things:
 - ▷ You must be awake, alert, and know where you are.
 - ▷ You must not be bleeding or vomiting.
 - ▷ Your blood pressure, pulse, breathing, and oxygen saturation must be close to normal for you.
 - ▷ You must be able to drink fluids.
 - ▷ You must be able to urinate.

We will remove your intravenous line after you can drink and urinate.

- ▶ Your doctor must write an order for your discharge.

Should I do anything special after conscious sedation?

- ▶ For your safety, a responsible adult must take you home or back to your hotel. This person must be available when you are ready for discharge.
- ▶ Do not take a bus, taxicab, or Metro without a responsible adult to ride with you.
- ▶ Do not drive, drink alcohol, use machinery, or sign legal documents for 24 hours after receiving conscious sedation.

This information is prepared specifically for persons taking part in clinical research at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center and may not apply to patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your health care team.

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Questions about the Clinical Center?
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8/07