

Procedural Sedation for Children

Information for patients, parents and carers

Sedation for a procedure is to help your child relax. They should not be so sleeping that they cannot respond to someone talking to or touching them. You will need to give permission for your child to be given sedation.

Why do we use procedural sedation?

Children may need sedation (made sleepy) to keep them relaxed and comfortable during a procedure.

Examples include when they need to:

- Lie very still during a test such as a scan
- Have a procedure which may be uncomfortable or scary, such as dressing a wound or fixing a broken bone

By giving your child a medicine for sedation during a procedure, it should help them stay calm. Sometimes, it can help us do the procedure more quickly.

What medicines may we give?

Commonly:

- Midazolam, Clonidine or Ketamine to calm your child. Midazolam also helps your child forget the procedure. We may use these alone or with a pain relief medicine such as morphine, oxycodone or fentanyl
- Entonox[®] (giggle/laughing gas) may be used if your child is at least 5 years old and can manage to use it
- Nitrous oxide gas may be used for procedures such as straightening broken bones or having Botox[®] injections into muscles to reduce spasticity
- Chloral hydrate may be used if your child needs to stay asleep for longer or lie very still

What are the risks?

- Sometimes, the medicines work too well. Even when your child was given the right dose, they may be very sleepy. If so, they may need oxygen through a mask or rarely a breathing tube

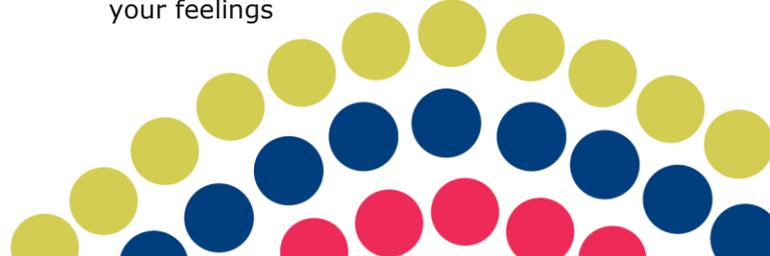
- Sometimes, midazolam may make your child agitated or upset instead of sleepy. They will settle again quite quickly with cuddles and reassurance
- Your child may vomit
- Sometimes, your child may not be relaxed enough and the staff will discuss with you the best option

How can we reduce these risks?

- Your child's doctor or nurse will ask you about your child's health including allergies and other medicines they take
- For some medicines, your child will need to fast (not have anything to eat or drink) before the procedure. If so, our staff will tell you and for how long
- Your child will be checked regularly to make sure they are comfortable and safe
- If your child has had medicine for sedation before, let your child's doctor or nurse know including how well it worked

How can I help my child before the procedure?

- Let your child know what will happen in a way they can understand
- If they are old enough, talk to them about ways they can cope
- Answer their questions. If you need help, please ask your child's doctor or nurse
- Tell your child we will keep them safe and as comfortable as possible
- Focus on why they are having the procedure e.g. so they can get better quickly and go home
- Remain calm as your child will pick up on your feelings



How can I help my child during the procedure?

- Having an adult your child trusts with them usually helps. If you feel that you are not able to stay or the procedure may upset you, you can take a break or not take part. You may like to arrange for another adult your child knows to be with them
- Even if you cannot stay during the procedure, your child will feel better if you or another adult they trust are with them as they wake up
- Keep your words helpful and focused on getting better
- Distraction can shift your child's focus from the procedure to something they enjoy. Distract them with storybooks, electronic games or similar. Ask your child questions about their favourite toy, activity or pets
- Guide your child's imagination to go somewhere in their mind that they enjoy or feel safe such as dancing or bike riding
- Praise your child and reinforce their ability to stay calm and cope. Let them know when they are doing well
- Ask your nurse for a brochure called 'Words I can use to help my child during a procedure'

Babies are calmer with:

- Cuddles
- Soothing and comforting sights and sounds such as your face, voice, music
- Swaddling
- Feeding them, if allowed

After the procedure:

Congratulate your child on what a good job they have done and for their help. Positive reinforcement is a crucial part of the procedure so your child feels as though they have been able to do the procedure well. This will also make future procedures a more positive experience. Always reinforce partial successes too – these will add up to big wins over time.

How long after the procedure will my child need to stay at the hospital?

- Ask the nurse how long your child will need to stay
- They will stay at the hospital until the main effects of the medicine have worn off

- This depends on your child's age, the medicine used and how it was given
- Your child may be awake at the end of the procedure but they need to have the chance to sleep before they leave as they can go into a deep sleep after the procedure has finished
- Our staff will tell you when your child is able to leave. They must be fully awake and had something to eat and drink
- If sedation is given in the evening, your child may have to stay the night in hospital

After leaving the hospital

- For 24 hours after leaving hospital, you child may be sleepy or clumsy due to delayed effects of the medicine
- **You should take your child home in a private car. We strongly advise you have 2 adults with your child during the drive home – one to drive and the other to watch your child**
- Put your child in the usual child restraint (e.g. car seat). Position them so, if they fall into a deep sleep, their head will not fall forward. This may make it hard for them to breathe
- Sometimes, even though your child was awake when leaving hospital, they may still go into a deep sleep
- **Should your child fall asleep within 2 hours of leaving the hospital, check them every 10 minutes to make sure you can wake them. If you are the only adult in the car, pull over every 10 minutes to check this**
- Your child can start to eat and drink normally once they are not sleepy any more
- Occasionally, your child may vomit. Do not worry if they vomit once or twice but if they keep vomiting, take them to a doctor
- For 24 hours after having a sedating medicine your child should not:
 - climb on equipment
 - ride a bike
 - drive
 - swim
 - use machines or toys that might cause an accident

If you are concerned about your child, bring them back to the hospital

If you cannot wake your child, ring emergency services (000) straight away

For more information

Women's and Children's Hospital
72 King William Rd, North Adelaide SA 5006
Telephone (08) 8161 7000
Date reviewed: February 2023



www.ausgoal.gov.au/
creative-commons



This document has been reviewed
and endorsed by WCHN consumers



Government of South Australia

Women's and Children's
Health Network