



# Tooth Talk

## “Hey Doc, I am SCARED of going to the dentist!!! Can you help me? (Part 4- IV sedation)”

For those who have moderate to more severe dental anxiety/phobia and would like to be “ensured” that they reach the level of sedation required for their comfort and relaxation during treatment, IV sedation may well be the sedation choice for them.

IV sedation is an advanced and effective method of conscious sedation used by highly trained dentists and is usually recommended for dental surgery procedures to help patients relax during long/stressful treatments such as wisdom teeth extractions, dental implant surgery, gum and bone grafting/surgery, and other more invasive treatments.

IV sedation does not actually induce sleep; instead, patients remain conscious and can follow instructions from the dentist. However, the feelings of relaxation will be intense enough for patients not to remember much about what happened under treatment. This is because the sedatives used in IV sedation can bring about amnesia, either in part or in full, from the time patients being to feel the effects of the sedation, to the time the effect wears off.

In IV sedation, the sedation drug is administered into a vein using a very thin needle that is encased in a soft plastic tube. When the needle is removed from the vein, it leaves the plastic tube behind, and this tube is used to administer the drug.

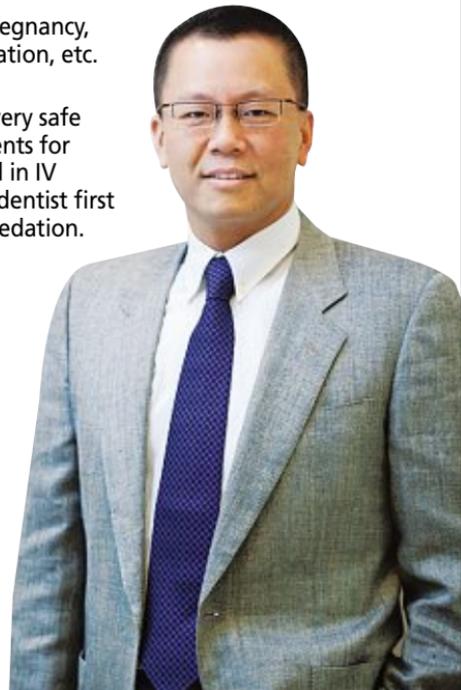
Advantages of IV sedation include:

- 1) Fast onset- usually 3 to 10 mins.
- 2) Deeper and more intense level of sedation than oral or Nitrous Oxide sedation.
- 3) Precise and adjustable dosage of sedation level- The dose of sedation can be titrated by giving small incremental doses until the precise dosage is given to the patient for the desired sedation level that provides comfort/relaxation. The ability to easily and quickly adjust the level or sedation is considered as the main advantage of IV sedation over oral sedation.
- 4) Amnesia- little or no memory of the dental procedures.
- 5) Gag reflex is diminished.
- 6) More treatment in fewer appointments due to patient comfort/relaxation.

Disadvantages/Limitations of IV sedation include:

- 1) Higher cost for the patients.
- 2) An escort is required to bring the patient home after treatment is completed under IV sedation.
- 3) IV access- If patients have an extreme fear of needles, they may not find it easy to have the needle inserted intravenously.
- 4) Hematoma- Occasionally, hematoma, the pooling of blood, may occur at the IV access site.
- 5) Over-sedation- Although rare, over-sedation can occur as IV sedation brings on a deeper level of sedation. However, patients are monitored closely by the dentist and by the nurse during the entire sedation appointment to ensure that they are not over-sedated.
- 6) Patients with certain medical conditions such as pregnancy, glaucoma, allergies to the sedatives used in IV sedation, etc. are not good candidates for IV sedation.

In summary, IV sedation is an effective, precise, and very safe method of providing comfort and relaxation to patients for their dental treatment. For those who are interested in IV sedation, it is advised that they consult with their IV dentist first to make sure that they are medically suitable for IV sedation.



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