

## Nitrous Oxide

Many children are calm, comfortable, and confident in a pediatric dental office. Because pediatric dentists specialize in treating children, they make children feel special. The office is especially designed for children. Staff members choose to work in a pediatric dental office because they like kids.

Sometimes, however, a child feels anxious during treatment. Your child may need more support than a gentle, caring manner to feel comfortable. Nitrous oxide/oxygen is a safe, effective technique to calm a child's fear of the dental visit.

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

A: Nitrous oxide/oxygen is a blend of two gases, oxygen and nitrous oxide. When inhaled, it is absorbed by the body and has a calming effect. Normal breathing eliminates nitrous oxide/oxygen from the body.

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

A: Your child will smell a sweet, pleasant aroma and experience a sense of well-being and relaxation. 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?**

A: Very safe. Nitrous oxide/oxygen is perhaps the safest sedative in dentistry. It is nonaddictive. It is mild, easily taken, then quickly eliminated by the body. Your child remains fully conscious, keeps all natural reflexes, when breathing nitrous oxide/oxygen.

**Q: Are there any special instructions for nitrous oxide/oxygen?**

A: First, give your child little or no food before the dental visit. (Occasionally, nausea or vomiting occurs when a child has a full stomach.) Second, tell your pediatric dentist about any respiratory condition that makes breathing through the nose difficult for your child. It may limit the effectiveness of nitrous oxide/oxygen. Third, tell your pediatric dentist if your child is taking any medication on the day of the appointment.

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

A: Pediatric dentists know that all children are not alike! Every service is tailored to your child as an individual. Nitrous oxide/oxygen is not effective for some children, especially those who have severe anxiety, nasal congestion, extensive treatment needs, or discomfort wearing a nasal mask. Pediatric dentists have comprehensive specialty training and can offer other sedation methods that are right for your child.