



Behavior Management Techniques

Papoose

The Papoose board (sleeping bag) is passive restraint used to immobilize patients during dental treatment. The papoose benefits the patient by safely keeping arms and legs still to prevent injury during dental work without forcibly holding patient down. The papoose is routinely used during oral sedation procedures, emergency dental procedures, and quick dental care for the very young patient or patient with special needs. The papoose is a type of restraint and is not ever used as a punishment for uncooperative patients. This may not be an ideal choice for children with extensive dental treatment needs.

Nitrous Oxide

Nitrous Oxide (laughing gas) is a safe and effective inhalational medication that reduces anxiety as well as pain threshold in a dental patient. Nitrous oxide works very well for a cooperative patient who needs help remaining calm. The gas only works when inhaled, once exhaled from the system patients are able to return to normal activities. There are minimal side effects (nausea, dizziness usual felt in dental office). Nitrous oxide may not work well on an extremely anxious child, on a very young child, or a child with special needs because they must cooperate (breathe with their nose) in order to feel the effects of the medication.

Oral Sedation

Oral sedation techniques involve taking medication prior to dental treatment used to calm your child and to reduce the anxiety or discomfort associated with dental treatments. It is recommended for apprehensive children, very young children, and children with special needs. Your child may be quite drowsy but it does NOT put a patient to sleep.

There are a variety of different medications, which can be used for conscious sedation. The doctor will prescribe the medication best suited for your child's overall health and dental treatment recommendations. In our office oral sedation is accompanied with the use of nitrous oxide and the papoose board. The benefit of oral sedation includes a greater degree of cooperation, greater anxiety relief, and occasionally patients have difficulty recalling treatment. Availability of this type of appointment in our office is usually within 4-6 weeks. Because oral sedation medications remain in the body for a minimum of 8-10 hours patients are unable to return to school the day of treatment.

In Hospital General Anesthesia

General anesthesia is an outpatient procedure performed at Prince William County Hospital. It is recommended for apprehensive children, very young children, and children with special needs that would not do well under conscious sedation or I.V. sedation. General anesthesia renders your child completely asleep. This would be the same as if he/she was having their tonsils removed, ear tubes, or hernia repaired. The assumed risks are greater than that of other treatment options. When this treatment option recommended your child, the benefits of general anesthesia have been deemed to outweigh the risks. Availability of this type of appointment is usually within 4-8 weeks