

# Sleep Dentistry

## IV Sedation for dental patients

### Dr. Bree Belford

#### Preparing for Sleep Dentistry

Dear Patient,

Your dentist has informed me that you would like to have sleep dentistry with your upcoming dental procedure. Please take a moment to read this information sheet which explains the procedure in detail, how you should prepare, and what happens afterwards. If you or your carer is receiving this document after your sedation is finished, please pay special attention to last section entitled ***"After sleep dentistry"***.

#### What is Sleep Dentistry?

Sleep dentistry is the use of intravenous (IV) sedation administered and supervised by a qualified and experienced medical doctor. It is often referred to as "Twilight Sleep" or "Twilight Sedation" or "Conscious sedation". It is the most advanced form of dental sedation available and uses a combination of sedative and pain relieving drugs to create a drowsy and dream like state of deep, calming relaxation for the entire duration of your dental procedure. It is a modern, safe and highly effective technique that will make your visit to the dentist a relaxing, comfortable and enjoyable experience.

#### What to do before you arrive

**There are 4 basic and simple things you need to do prior to arriving on the day of your appointment. Each one is required for a specific reason and it is very important that you follow these instructions exactly.**

**Fasting:** Please ensure that you have nothing to eat 6 hrs before your scheduled appointment ("nil-by-mouth"). This includes lollies and chewing gum and milk (even in tea and coffee). Do not have anything to drink 2 hrs before the appointment (not even water). If your appointment is in the morning, this may mean nothing to eat or drink from midnight the night before. If you have an afternoon appointment it may be ok to have a small snack or meal before hand but you must finish it no less than 6 hrs prior to your treatment. If in doubt, **DON'T EAT! IF YOU ARE NOT PROPERLY FASTED, YOUR APPOINTMENT MAY HAVE TO BE RESCHEDULED!**

**Medications:** It is important to take your usual medications at the time you would normally take them – even if this is within the fasting period. In this case, a small sip of water to swallow your pills is permissible. The main (and very important) exception to this is if you are a diabetic – generally speaking, you **MUST NOT** take your insulin, or diabetic pills if you are intending to not eat and drink. Please talk to me about this beforehand so that we can work out a plan for your medications before and after sedation. Most other medicines can and should be taken. If you have any doubts or concerns about this, please contact me (see below for contact details).

**Loose and comfortable clothing:** Please wear comfortable clothing- most dental treatments are prolonged. You should wear short sleeves, or else sleeves that can be loosely rolled up all the way up your arm. This is to allow a blood pressure cuff to be fitted to your upper arm on one side, and a tourniquet to be applied to the other side so that a cannula can be inserted (see below). Please do not wear one piece outfits, sometimes an adhesive patch needs be placed on the side of your rib cage under your shirt or blouse. Don't worry about being cold – you will be covered by a heat-preserving space blanket during the procedure to keep you warm and comfortable.

**Getting home:** After the procedure is finished you will have a brief recovery period after which you can go straight home. You must be accompanied home by a responsible adult. Under no circumstances will you be able to drive home from the dentist – nor drive for the rest of the day. You cannot walk home (even if it is close) nor can you go by bus. It is permissible to go home by taxi, but even then only in the company of a responsible adult friend or relative (not the taxi driver!) **IF YOU HAVE NOT MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO BE ACCOMPANIED HOME, YOUR PROCEDURE MAY HAVE TO BE RESCHEDULED.**

## Before Sleep Dentistry

You need to arrive at the dental surgery about 15 mins before your scheduled procedure. I will meet you for the first time and we will have a brief consultation. Firstly, we will discuss your health history. I will want to know the following things:

- **Your medical history** – Both past and present medical problems if any.
- **Your surgical history** - What sort of operations or procedures you have had at any time in your life for any reason.
- **Pregnancy and breastfeeding** - If you think you could be pregnant, or you are currently breastfeeding, we need to discuss these issues before the day of your appointment.
- **Medications** – What medicines you are currently taking. You should continue taking your usual medications. Please talk with me before hand if you are a diabetic – the fact that you need to fast before Sleep dentistry may necessitate delaying your insulin or pills until after the procedure when you are able to eat again.
- **Allergies** – Let me know about any allergies or adverse reactions you have had to any medicines, antibiotics or anaesthetics.

I will then explain the entire procedure for Sleep Dentistry to you (much of which is detailed in this letter) and give you a consent form to read and sign. If you still have any questions you'd like to discuss or issues you'd like to clarify, we can discuss these at this time.

**Special Note:** Even though you have not had anything to eat for 6 hrs and drink for 2 hrs, it is still very important that you visit the toilet before we actually begin Sleep Dentistry. A full bladder during sedation can cause you to be restless (even though you won't be aware of it) and it is impossible to stop and go to the toilet once Sleep Dentistry had begun! To save time, please visit the toilet before your initial consultation.

## During Sleep Dentistry

When you sit in the dentist's chair, you will be covered with a warm blanket and a blood pressure cuff will be wrapped around your arm. This will be used to monitor your BP during the procedure.

In the other arm I will quickly insert a cannula. This is the one and only needle you will get and it's only hair thin – it's the same type used for infants and children. I can assure you that it doesn't hurt – most people are barely aware of it – for others it's like a small scratch or mosquito bite! In any event, it isn't left in the arm; it is removed immediately and discarded. What's left in its place is the "cannula", a small plastic port. This allows me to do two things. Firstly, it means I can give you repeated doses of the sedation throughout the entire procedure without you having to feel any more needles – the needles go into the cannula and not your skin. Secondly, it means that I can give you repeated small doses of the sedation, without ever having to give you large doses. This is what keeps Sleep Dentistry very safe. You are breathing and maintaining your blood pressure on your own without any assistance. I am sitting there at your side the entire time monitoring you with state of the art equipment.

We take our time getting you to the proper, relaxed state. Don't worry, the dentist will not start anything until you are properly sedated, you won't even be aware of the injections in the mouth! Slowly and gradually, you will slip into a very pleasant, warm and relaxing dream-like-state, not quite awake and not quite asleep. During this time you will be unaware of, and undisturbed by the noises, tastes, sights and smells of the dental procedure, or of the needles, drilling or instruments in the mouth. There is no pain, no anxiety and no discomfort.

Although deep enough to be relaxed, comfortable and unaware, you are still able to cooperate with the dentist when asked. Afterwards, you will drift off again with no recollection of it ever happening. It is an amazing property of Sleep Dentistry that when it is all over, you tend not to remember any of it at all. You are left with a heightened sense of well being. It feels as though you slept right through the entire dental procedure and that time has passed by in the blink of an eye. In fact you were actually hovering between being awake and being asleep. It must be remembered that this is not general anaesthetic (GA). In a GA, you are rendered deeply unconscious and unresponsive. In this state, your airway may need to be protected by a tube going down your throat (since you are unable to protect your airway yourself), and you may need assistance breathing (with a ventilator) since your breathing may become shallow, irregular or even absent. Your blood pressure may be unstable and need to be regulated as well. As you can imagine, a GA can only be done in an operating theatre in a hospital or licensed day surgery.

## After Sleep Dentistry

When your procedure is finished, you will “wake up” naturally and gradually, during which time I will continue to monitor you. When you are awake enough to walk steadily you can go home. The person taking you home will need to park close by and will hold your arm and “walk” you to the car (myself or a member of staff may help as well). At home, they should walk you into the house as well. On arriving home, you may feel like going straight to sleep again. This is ok, but we will ask whoever is with you to gently wake you up every hr for the next 4 hrs to make sure you are easily woken. Some people will recover very quickly and feel normal straight away. In fact, you may feel a heightened sense of relaxation, warmth and well being – and not drowsy at all. That is fine but be aware that this is an illusion and a by-product of the great sense of well being experienced with Sleep Dentistry. Your reflexes, coordination and judgment will all be impaired, sometimes subtly. If you don't feel like sleeping, we ask that you simply “flake out” in front of the TV, video, DVD or with a good book or magazine. Don't engage in any activity for the rest of the day. It is always possible that a mistake in judgment or a mishap due to lack of coordination may cause injury. Therefore it is imperative that for the remainder of the day you observe the following precautions:

- Do not drive or operate any tools or machinery.
- Do not drink alcohol or take any sedatives or sleeping pills or recreational drugs (your normal medications are usually ok, we'll discuss this).
- Do not do any housework, cooking, cleaning, ironing, gardening etc.
- Do not go to work or conduct any business at home.
- Stay at home and rest. DO NOT go out anywhere today or tonight (even if accompanied).

Usually by the next morning you are fully recovered and can get back to normal activities. Sometimes, after a long sedation or one that finishes up late in the day, you might find that you are still slightly “under the influence” the next day. Please make the allowances for this and do not resume normal activities until you are able. When you leave, you may be given prescriptions for some medications and an instruction sheet detailing when and how to take them. I give every patient an envelope containing the drug Maxolon (or Stemetil, if appropriate). These are used for nausea or vomiting. It is actually very rare and unusual to feel nausea after Sleep Dentistry, and most patients never need to use this medicine. However, I like each patient to have it at home with them – just in case. In the unlikely event that you do feel a bit queasy after you get home, you won't have to run out and find a doctor to get a script. Most likely you will not need to take this medication and if not, please discard it. Although not part of your sedation, you may also be prescribed some painkillers and /or antibiotics if the dentist feels these to be necessary.

### Want to know more?

If you would like more information, have any questions, or would like to discuss sleep dentistry further, please feel free to contact me. If you have particular medical problems that you would like me to discuss with your own doctor prior to your appointment, please let me know as well. I can be contacted any of the following ways:

**By mobile phone:** [0421 064 044](tel:0421064044). Please be aware that I maintain a full time practice giving IV sedation to dental and surgical patients and that I am usually busy in operating theatre or dental surgeries. If you get my voice mail, please state your name, phone number, and the dentist you will be having your treatment with and I will endeavour to get back to you as soon as possible.

**By E-mail:** [sleepdentistry@ozemail.com.au](mailto:sleepdentistry@ozemail.com.au)

### And finally.....some reassurance!!

I know that patients are frequently nervous about the prospect of seeing the dentist, and if they have never had sedation before, about the process of sedation itself. Please feel free to discuss your fears with me if you need to. I am very approachable and will be happy to discuss every aspect of sleep dentistry in detail with you. I want you to be fully informed. Let me assure you that sleep dentistry itself is a very pleasant and enjoyable experience, and makes the dental experience enjoyable as well. After the first time it is no longer mysterious and unknown, the time in the dental chair seems to pass in an instant and subsequent visits are far less stressful. In fact, many patients report looking forward to seeing the dentist after that – both because the experience of sleep dentistry is so relaxing and, most importantly, because they know they are finally getting the dental care they need but have been putting off for months or even years! Sleep Dentistry takes the stress and anxiety out of the dental visit.

I am looking forward to meeting you on the day of your appointment.

Kind Regards  
Dr. Bree Belford

## [An Important Note about Fasting](#)

Thankyou for your interest in Sleep Dentistry. Please find enclosed several documents that explain the entire procedure in detail. It's important that you take the time to read these information sheets before the day of your appointment. They should also be read by the person taking you home after your treatment is completed on the day.

It is especially important that you prepare yourself for sleep dentistry before coming in for your appointment by making sure that you are properly fasted. This means

**Absolutely nothing to eat and drink for 6 hrs prior to your scheduled appointment (not even a small bite)**

**Absolutely nothing to drink for 2 hrs prior to your scheduled appointment (not even a small sip)**

These are not guidelines but absolute rules which must be followed to the letter. If you are having morning or early afternoon appointment, this means nothing to eat from midnight the night before (not even a light breakfast snack) and nothing to drink for 2 hrs before appointment (not even water). If your appointment is mid to late afternoon or evening, you may be able to have a light breakfast ONLY if you are able to finish eating at least 6 hrs before your scheduled appointment. If this is not possible, or difficult to time properly, then do not take any chances and do not eat anything at all from midnight the night before no matter when your appointment is. Please also note that chewing gums or sucking lollies is the equivalent to eating from an anaesthetic viewpoint, and you must do not do either 6 hrs prior to your appointment.

No eating before any anaesthetic or sedation is an important safety issue and must be observed strictly and without exceptions, however minor those exceptions may seem to you. Know people are anxious before having dental treatment and that some people will relieve anxiety by having just a small amount of something to eat or drink. Fasting is not hard as people often think, and the reward in term of pleasant, comfortable and pain-free dental visit is well worth the effort. Please keep in mind that if you have taken a small bite to eat, or a small sip to drink (even if you thought it wasn't really enough to matter), then your IV sedation will not be able to take place on the day. Which would be an enormous waste of your time and ours? If you need to take any medications before coming in on the day, please talk to me about how you should do this.

If you have any questions or confusion about the fasting rules prior to sedation, don't take chances. DO NOT EAT OR DRINK. Instead, please feel free to call me at any time on 0421 064 044 for reassurance or to answer any of your questions.

### ***Important - Recovery and going home – Instructions for the carer.***

Recovery from sedation is fairly rapid for most people and many people are left with a heightened sense of well being and sometimes a feeling of euphoria. Despite this however, please keep in mind that although appearing awake and alert, the patient's reflexes, judgement and coordination will all be somewhat impaired, and this may be subtle (think of it as being a little "over the limit"). It may not be obvious to either the patient (who may insist they are fine) or to you. For this reason, patients must be accompanied home by a responsible adult. Please park close by and hold onto the patient as you walk him/her to the car (a staff member can help if necessary) and again from the car to the house. Once back at home the patient should rest quietly (it's a good idea to simply relax in front of the TV, or with a book or magazine), and for the rest of the day and evening should not do anything. (More information can be found in the 3-page booklet – please read this carefully as well).

**Medication-** An information sheet (and script, if appropriate) has been provided with instructions for any medications the dentist wants the patient to take – this may include prescription painkillers and antibiotics. You have also been given an envelope with a single tablet called MOXOLON to be used only if the patient is feeling nausea or vomiting after getting home. Feeling sick after sedation is actually unusual, but we like all patients to have the tablet available – just in case. The instructions are on the envelope, and if the tablet is not needed please dispose of it appropriately.

**Eating and drinking-** There are no specific restrictions regarding eating and drinking after IV sedation as long as the effects of the numbing needles in the mouth have worn off and the patient is feeling awake enough to want to eat or drink and is not having problems swallowing. It's best to begin slowly and in smaller than usual portions initially The dentist will inform you if there are additional eating restrictions relating to the dental work (especially if they have had a surgical procedure)

**Contact number –** Please do not hesitate to call me if there are any questions or issues that you would like me to discuss after returning home. I can be reached on my mobile and it is never an inconvenience. Please leave a message and a return phone number if you reach my answering service. If you have any problems relating to the dental work itself (as opposed to IV sedation) it's best to contact the dentist.