

Procedural Sedation

What is it?

Procedural sedation is the use of medicine to make your child relaxed or sleepy so he can have a test or medical procedure.

A doctor, nurse practitioner, or registered nurse may give your child his sedation. It is important that you understand the risks and benefits of sedation to help decide what is best for your child.

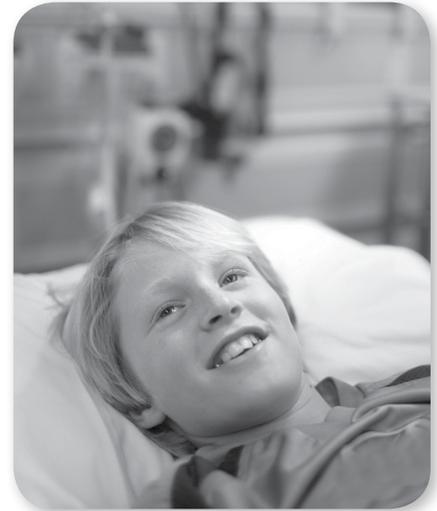
Why does my child need it?

Some procedures can be painful or frightening to a child. Others may take so long that a young child cannot hold still.

Sedation medication makes the test or procedure easier for your child and allows it to be successful.

Talking with healthcare providers

The table below lists the most common potential benefits, risks, and alternatives for procedural sedation. Other benefits and risks may apply in your child’s unique medical situation. Talking with your child’s healthcare providers is the most important part of learning about these risks and benefits. If you have questions, be sure to ask them.



How can I prepare?

- **Have your child fast for the time you are instructed.** You will be instructed not to give your child anything to eat or drink for several hours before the procedure. It is very important that you follow these instructions, so your child will have an empty stomach before getting any sedation medicines. Children can throw up during procedures, and could choke or breathe stomach contents into their lungs. If you don’t follow the directions, your child’s procedure may be postponed or your child may experience complications.

Potential Benefits	Risks and Potential Complications	Alternatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps your child remain still, so healthcare providers can do the procedure • Lessens your child’s sensation of pain or fear during the procedure • Makes the procedure more successful 	<p>Procedural sedation is usually very safe. Possible risks or complications include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nausea or vomiting • Waking up restless or agitated (rare) • Life-threatening complications (very rare), including: drug reactions, pneumonia, slowing or stopping of the heart rate or breathing 	<p>For some procedures there is no alternative to sedation, because they require your child to stay absolutely still.</p> <p>For other procedures it may be possible for your child to avoid sedation, although the experience will be more unpleasant.</p> <p>Please ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about sedation.</p>

- **Answer your healthcare provider's questions.** Your healthcare provider will ask you about your child's medical history. It is very important to report your child's recent illnesses, colds, fevers, allergies and medications.
- **Help your healthcare provider choose the best option for your child.** Your healthcare provider will discuss sedation choices with you. Ask questions if something isn't clear, and tell your healthcare provider anything that should be considered in choosing sedation.

- **Avoiding too much sedation:** Sedation medicines are often given a little at a time so your child doesn't get too much. The procedure and your child's medical condition determine how much medicine your child can receive. Some children may be so young or so ill that they can only have light sedation. Your child's safety is our first concern.
- **Your child's reaction:** Your child may drift off to sleep or remain awake. Some children may dream, others become talkative, silly, or tearful.

How is the sedation given before the procedure?

What happens before the procedure depends on the sedation that will be given:

- Some sedation medicines are taken by swallowing them, like a pill or liquid.
- Other sedation medicines are given in an IV (a small plastic tube placed in a vein). If an IV hasn't already been placed in your child's arm or hand, it would be inserted at this time.
- Occasionally, medicine may be given as a shot if your child is not able to cooperate enough.

What happens after the procedure?

How long it takes your child to be fully awake depends on your child, the medicines he gets, and how long the procedure lasts. Your child may be awake right after the procedure or stay sleepy for some time. Your child will be monitored and observed until the sedation has worn off. Generally, he will be able to drink as soon as he is awake.

If your child is going home following the procedure, it is important that you follow these guidelines:

- **Watch your child carefully.** Do not leave your child alone. Your child may be more sleepy than usual for 24 hours, but should be easy to wake up, and should act normally when he is awake.
- **Keep your child's head upright.** Watch him during the ride home. His head should not fall forward. If this happens, it may make it difficult for him to breathe.
- **Follow your healthcare provider's instructions.** Your healthcare provider will explain any special precautions you need to take, based on the sedation that was used.
- **Call your doctor with concerns.** If you have a concern about your child after you get home, call the number listed on the discharge instruction sheet or call your primary care physician.

What happens during the procedure?

During the procedure, several things related to sedation will happen.

- **Monitoring:** One person will be assigned to check your child's breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure. This person is specially trained and their only responsibility is to care for your child. If monitoring shows your child needs oxygen or IV fluids, he will receive them.