

# Learning About Sedation for Your Child

If your child needs surgery, a procedure, or a test, you may be worried or concerned.

It can help to know that your child's medical care team will use anesthesia to help your child feel comfortable, relaxed, and free from pain.

One type of anesthesia is called sedation.

Sedation is the use of medicines to help someone feel relaxed during a procedure.

Sometimes sedation is used to help with pain.

Sedation is used in many procedures and tests.

For example, it may be used in dental procedures or MRIs.

In some cases, sedation is used with numbing medicine to block pain in part of the body.

Sedation medicine may be given by mouth or inhaled in the nose as drops or a mist.

Or it may be given in a vein using an intravenous, or I.V., tube.

The doctor or nurse will make sure that your child gets just the right amount of medicine.

And they will watch your child closely during the procedure.

During the procedure, your child may be awake and able to talk with the care team.

Or your child may fall asleep.

They might remember little, if anything, of the procedure or surgery.

Now here's what you can expect after the procedure or surgery.

Your child may feel dizzy, unsteady, or tired. Babies often sleep more than usual.

Some children feel nauseated and may vomit. The care team may give them medicines to help.

The time it takes for sedation medicines to wear off depends on the medicines used and how your child's body responds to them.

The care team will make sure that your child isn't too sleepy to go home.

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Now let's learn about preparing for sedation.

Before getting the sedation medicine, the doctor will examine your child to check for anything that could affect your child's care.

The doctor will also discuss any risks and how your child may feel after the sedation.

Tell your child's doctor about any health problems—such as sleep apnea—and any surgeries your child has had.

Also tell them if a family member has had problems with anesthesia.

And tell the doctor about all medicines and natural health products your child takes.

And here's something else you can prepare for.

Your child may be asked a lot of questions that seem personal.

The questions are not being asked to judge you or your child.

They are being asked to keep your child safe.

For example, if you think that your child uses tobacco, marijuana, opioids, or any other drugs, let the care team know.

They may need to adjust your child's medicines to keep your child safe.

They will keep this information confidential.

Some hospital care teams include a child life specialist.

If yours does, this person can help you and your child understand and prepare for the sedation.

And if the hospital staff says it's okay, let your child pick out things to bring to the hospital that can help comfort them before and after the procedure.

Now, if your child's surgery or procedure involves staying at the hospital, remember to bring the things your child needs to help them sleep, such as a CPAP machine if they use one or maybe their blanket or a stuffed toy.

Thinking about sedation may be stressful.

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But knowing what to expect and how to prepare can help.

And if you have any questions or concerns, you can always talk to your child's doctor.

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