



**FACULTY OF  
PAIN MEDICINE**  
of the Royal College of Anaesthetists

**Information sheet for adult patients undergoing:**

# **Sedation for Procedures**

**for the Treatment of Pain**

## **What is sedation?**

Sedation involves using small amounts of anaesthetic drugs to produce a 'sleep-like' state. It makes you physically and mentally relaxed, but not unconscious.

## **When will my doctor use sedation?**

This will be a joint decision and is usually offered to reduce anxiety.

## **Will I remember the procedure?**

Most people will remember the procedure due to the low levels of sedation used.

## How will sedation be given?

Your pain doctor will need to give you medicines(s) into a vein. They will do this through a small plastic tube placed in the vein. This is called a cannula. A needle is used to put the cannula into a vein on the back of your hand or in your arm. The anaesthetist will use a tourniquet (tight band) around the arm, to make the vein more obvious. Often the anaesthetic practitioner will hold or squeeze the arm instead of using a tourniquet.

## Will sedation cause side effects?

Sedation can cause side effects which are generally short-lived (last a few hours). This includes tiredness, dizziness, poor sleep patterns, temporary memory loss, rarely shivering, allergy, and nausea or even vomiting. Sometimes bruising may occur around the injection sites. This may be caused by a vein leaking blood around the cannula. It normally settles without treatment other than removing the cannula.

## What will happen to me after the injections?

After the injection you will be taken to a recovery or ward area where nursing staff will observe you. You may feel a little drowsy and wish to sleep. Sometimes you will be asked to lay flat for about 30 minutes or longer. You may be assisted to sit up and your blood pressure and pulse will be checked. You will be advised when to get dressed and be given assistance to help to ensure that you can stand safely after the procedure.

## When will I be able to go home from hospital after my injections?

You will usually be able to return home within a few hours after the injection and in some cases much sooner, depending on how long your doctor or nurse want you to stay for recovery. Please ensure that you have made arrangements for someone to collect you after the procedure. Failure to do so will likely result in your procedure being cancelled. It is unsafe for you to drive home immediately after the procedure. If you do so your motor insurance will be invalid.

## What can I do after my procedure?

You may feel weak or tired for a little while after the injection so we advise that arrange for someone to stay with you for 24 hours and gently mobilise. You should not drive, nor operate machinery, sign legal documents, provide childcare unsupervised or drink alcohol for 24 hours.

## When can I return to work after the procedure?

This will vary between individuals and may depend on the nature of your work. It is difficult to give general advice and so you should discuss this with your doctor.

## Who can give me advice when I am at home?

Before you leave the ward, you should make sure that you know how and who to contact if you develop significant pain or other problems at home. You may get this information from the nurse who arranges your discharge from hospital or the doctors on the ward.

## Finally...

The information in this leaflet is not intended to replace your doctor's or health care team's advice. If you require more information or have any questions or concerns please speak to your GP or contact your Pain Clinic.

Name:	
Pain Service:	
Address:	
Contact numbers:	

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