

# DENTAL QUESTION



**Stoney Creek  
Dental Group**

Dr. Allen Park & Associates

## **QUESTION:**

**What options are there if I have a dental phobia?**

## **ANSWER:**

Many people have some anxiety or phobia associated with the dental office and as a result have either neglected or put-off treatments that are required. The cause of the anxiety can be broad in scope and impact each person differently. For example, anxiety can be caused by a bad gag reflex, trust issues, or fear of needles. However, there are different sedation techniques that may help get you through your dental appointment.

There are three different types of sedation: inhalation, oral, and intravenous. Inhalation, or better known as 'laughing gas', involves nitrous oxide in which patients have a feeling of pleasant intoxication. Oral sedation is administered by swallowing a pill or liquid just prior to your appointment. Lastly, intravenous sedation is performed by administering a drug into your blood-stream through your vein. For this type of sedation it is important to realize that it does not mean you'll be sleeping or be 'knocked-out' for your appointment. Rather, you remain conscious and able to respond to any requests but you may not remember much or all aspects of your appointment.

For each of these methods the dentist may still give you a local anesthetic to numb any pain because sedation only helps you to relax. If however, you would like be 'knocked-out' then some dental offices offer general anesthesia (GA) services with a dedicated medical team. This procedure will put you into a state of deep sleep and you will not be conscious.

Choosing the best method will depend on what your anxieties are and which method(s) of sedation are available at your dentist's office. If, for example, you get anxious with the thought of dental drills then perhaps either nitrous oxide or an oral sedative will help you relax to get through your appointment. In addition, if you also have a general trust issue, you can bring a friend or family member to sit by your side through your appointment as well.

Talk to your dentist about your concerns and together you can determine what the best choice will be for you.

If you have any questions about this article then please don't hesitate to email me at [ask@stoneycreekdental.ca](mailto:ask@stoneycreekdental.ca).

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