

# Procedural sedation for adults

## The purpose of this handout is to explain:

1. Procedural sedation
2. The risks of procedural sedation
3. The signs to look for when you go home

Before being given procedural sedation we need your consent, so please read this document carefully.

## What is procedural sedation?

Certain tests or treatments for illnesses or injuries can cause pain or distress. We use procedural sedation to reduce your pain and anxiety.

Procedural sedation involves giving you medication intravenously that will make you very sleepy, unaware and unable to experience any pain or discomfort. You may have little or no memory of the procedure. It will be performed by experienced doctors and nurses who are fully trained and able to respond immediately and appropriately if there are unexpected side effects.

## What are the risks of sedation?

Modern sedation is generally very safe but there is a risk of side effects and complications. Approximately 15 per cent of patients will experience either a side effect or failure of the sedation to work. Most side effects are minor and temporary, with major complications occurring less than 1 per cent of the time.

The risk to you will depend on:

- Whether you have any illnesses or allergies
- Whether you are taking medications
- Personal risk factors, such as whether you smoke or are overweight

We will ask you about all of these factors.

Common side effects and complications of procedural sedation (occur in only 5 to 10 per cent of people):

- Faintness or dizziness
- Transient fall in blood pressure
- Transient fall in oxygen levels or breathing rate
- Nausea or vomiting

- Mild allergic reaction such as itching or rash
- Failure of sedation

Rare risks of sedation (occur in less than 1 per cent):

- Vomit in the lungs (aspiration)
- Severe allergic reaction
- Severe low blood pressure (shock)
- Abnormal heart beat (too fast or too slow)

It is extremely rare for these side effects, if they occur, to cause death or any permanent damage. We monitor you very closely during and after the sedation and can detect and act on any issues immediately.

## Recovery from sedation

After the procedure, nursing staff will watch you closely until you are fully awake. If we are not planning to admit you to hospital after the procedure, you will then be given something to eat and drink. You will rest in our emergency department until you have recovered enough to go home.

## Things for you to avoid after your procedure

Sedation will affect your judgment for about 24 hours. For your own safety:

- Do NOT drive any type of car, bike or other vehicle
- Do NOT operate machinery including cooking implements
- Do NOT make important decisions or sign any legal document
- Do NOT drink alcohol, take other mind-altering substances, or smoke, as these can react with the anaesthetic drugs
- Have an adult stay with you on the first night after your procedure

## Seeking help

**Cabrini Emergency Department (ED)** is staffed by experienced emergency doctors and nurses 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. If you have any questions about your ED treatment our qualified ED staff can be contacted on **(03) 9508 1500** at any time. If you need to return to Cabrini ED for ongoing care we would be glad to take care of you again and if this occurs within a week of your initial consultation the doctor's fee will be bulk-billed.

## PATIENT INFORMATION

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You can also expect to receive a phone call or SMS message from one of our emergency nurses the day after you have been discharged. The nurse will be able to clarify any aspect of your diagnosis, treatment, or follow-up.

In a medical emergency return to Cabrini ED if it is safe to do so or go to the nearest hospital emergency department or call an ambulance – dial triple zero (000).

### Want to know more?

- Contact Cabrini ED on **(03) 9508 1500**
- Ask your local doctor or healthcare professional