



**Things You Should Know About
X-rays and Sedation:
Dentistry for Individuals with Disabilities**



Presented by the
Consumer Caucus
of the
New York State
Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

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This pamphlet is one in a series on oral health needs of individuals with disabilities. It is intended to help individuals with disabilities learn about things that happen at the dentist's office so they will have healthy teeth and gums. It was developed for all individuals with disabilities, their caregivers, dental professionals, and medical professionals associated with good oral health care.

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What is Oral Health Care?

Oral health care means taking care of
your mouth,
including your teeth, gums, and jaws.

To have a healthy mouth means brushing
2 or 3 times a day, flossing once a day,
and visiting a dentist every 3 to 4 months.

Part of the dentist's visit is having x-rays,
or pictures,
taken of your teeth and gums.

If you are anxious about the dental visit,
you may want to be sedated to make you
feel more comfortable in the dentist's
office.

This pamphlet tells you about x-rays and
sedation.

After reading this pamphlet, you will be
ready to have the dentist help you make
your teeth healthy and strong.

What are x-rays?

X-rays are pictures of your teeth and jaws.
They are usually taken at the dentist's office.

Having x-rays taken does not hurt at all.



X-rays help the dentist to see how your teeth are growing in.



To make sure that x-rays are safe, the dentist will have you wear a heavy apron to protect your body.

What are the different types of x-rays?

Your dentist may use different types of X-rays to look at all of your teeth.



Some x-rays show a few teeth and are used to find cavities between them.



Your dentist may use something to hold the x-ray film in place.

Other x-rays are pictures of all your teeth at once. You do not have to hold these, but you will have to sit still for a few seconds.



Some x-rays are pictures of your whole head and jaw. You may need to have x-rays taken every 6 to 24 months to make sure your teeth are healthy.

What is Sedation?

Sedation keeps you calm while the dentist works on your teeth.

Some people have their dental work done under sedation.



Sedation makes you feel relaxed and you do not feel anxiety.

Are there different forms of sedation?

There are several forms of sedation.

Minimal sedation is given to help you relax, but you will need “novocaine” to relieve pain.

Conscious sedation is a another type of sedation given to help you relax. You will still need “novocaine” to relieve pain.

You will stay awake but you might not remember what happened.

In **deep sedation**, you are asleep and not aware of what is going on.



General anesthesia makes you go to sleep. You do not feel anything. You will not remember any of the dental work.

Local Anesthesia is a drug that prevents pain in one small area of your mouth. This is usually given by injection with a needle into the gum. You stay awake and alert.

How is sedation given?



You may breath in nitrous oxide (laughing gas) through a mask.



You may have the sedative enter your body through your vein.



Or you may swallow a pill.

Ask for the way that you will be most comfortable with.

What else should I know about sedation?



Meet the dentist first and ask questions about sedation.



Let the dentist know your complete and accurate medical history.



Your dentist may tell you that you need to be in the dental office for a long time. Using some kind of sedation will help you to relax for this visit.

Your dentist may also suggest that you go to the hospital for your visit. You will be sedated while you are getting dental work done.



Doctors and nurses at the hospital will make the visit very safe.



There is a little risk with the different types of sedation, but the benefits of relief from stress may outweigh the risks. Not all dentists work with individuals with disabilities.

And not all dentists offer sedation.
Please check the Office of Mental Retar-
dation and Developmental Disabilities
Special Dentistry Task Force website.

www.omr.state.ny.us

[Hp_dentistry_locations.jsp](#)

This website provides a list of dentists in
your county who work with individuals
with disabilities and who offer sedation.

You may also find sedation dentists in
New York State at the

Sedation Dentist Directory website:

[www.sedation--dentist.com/
newyorksedationdentists.html](http://www.sedation--dentist.com/newyorksedationdentists.html)

If you have any questions about x-rays and
sedation, always call your dentist for
information.

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Images:

Photos.com

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