

What is nitrous oxide?

Nitrous oxide is a medicine in the form of gas that acts fast and wears off fast. It helps your child relax and decreases pain. Breathing it in will make your child groggy but most often does not cause a deep sleep. Nitrous oxide is:

- Also called laughing gas.
- Often used for procedures at the dentist.
- Used for certain medical procedures, such as when a child needs stitches or an I.V. placed.

How does the care team give it?

- The care team gives nitrous oxide mixed with oxygen through tubing connected to a nose or face mask.
- Your child may be offered a scent, such as bubble gum or strawberry, to place inside the mask. This makes the gas smell good while they breathe in the oxygen and nitrous oxide
- Within about 1 to 3 minutes after breathing in nitrous oxide, your child may start laughing and appear dazed, disoriented (confused), relaxed and sleepy.
- The air that your child breathes out into the mask is suctioned out of the room so others in the room do not become confused or sleepy.
- After the procedure, your child will breathe in oxygen for about 3 to 5 minutes or until they are fully awake.
- The care team will monitor your child closely until they turn off the medicine and your child is fully awake.

What are the side effects?

- Nitrous oxide is safe for use in children. Side effects are not common.
- If side effects happen, they are most often mild. Some side effects include upset stomach (nausea), vomiting (throwing up) and headache.
 - Headache can happen at the end of the procedure. It almost always goes away after breathing oxygen for a few minutes.
 - The care team may need to pause or stop the procedure to suction your child's nose and mouth if your child vomits.
- Nitrous oxide is not safe for women in their first 3 months of pregnancy.
 - **Tell us if you think you are pregnant.** We will ask that you step out of the room while your child receives nitrous oxide.
 - **Also tell us if there is a chance your child may be pregnant.**

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Nitrous oxide, continued

What can I expect after the care team turns off nitrous oxide?

- Nitrous oxide wears off very fast in less than 5 minutes.
- The care team will give your child oxygen to breathe for about 3 to 5 minutes.
- Your child should wake up feeling comfortable.
 - A small number of children can be confused or irritable before they wake up fully. This goes away in a few minutes.
 - Some children may feel nauseated or vomit right away after waking up, but nitrous oxide should not cause your child to vomit at home.

When should I call the doctor?

Call the doctor if your child:

- Vomits (throws up) 3 or more times.
- Has fast, shallow breathing.
- Has a tight feeling in the chest.

Also call the doctor if you have any questions or concerns about how your child looks or feels.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.