



Maitri Health Care for Women

Obstetrics, Gynecology and Midwifery

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Use of Nitrous Oxide for Pain Management at Maitri

Patient Education

What is it exactly?

Nitrous oxide (N₂O) used at Maitri is a mixture of 50% nitrous gas and 50% oxygen that is inhaled through a mask. Nitrous oxide is used for labor pain management and painful procedures. It is used widely in dental offices, where most people know of it as “laughing gas.” Nitrous oxide slows down your nervous system and induces a sense of calm and euphoria. It reduces anxiety and helps you stay more comfortable during a procedure.

How does it work?

You will hold your own mask and begin to inhale the gas mixture about 30 seconds before the procedure begins. Starting to inhale before the procedure begins helps the gas to reach its peak effect at about the same time as the pain response reaches its peak, providing the greatest relief.

Will the nurses or OB providers be administering nitrous?

No; the nitrous oxide is self-administered by you, the patient. You will breathe it in as you feel the need. Your provider and nurse will be present during the procedure and will review how to use it with you.

Does nitrous oxide have any side effects?

- Some patients have reported nausea and dizziness but most often patients report feeling sleepy and relaxed. You will still be aware of what is happening around you but will feel dreamy and floaty, sometimes warm, and may have tingling in your hands and feet. You may be a little forgetful, and might not be able to remember the procedure afterwards.
- Nitrous can also cause some unsteadiness when standing up, which is why there should always be a family member or staff person in the room when you would like to get off of the table in case you need assistance.

Will my insurance cover this?

- Unfortunately insurance does not cover the cost of nitrous.
- The cost for nitrous oxide will be **\$150**, which is an out-of-pocket expense and will not count towards your insurance or deductible.
- Payment will be required at the time of your visit.

After the procedure

You will recover from the effects of the nitrous oxide very quickly once your procedure or treatment has been completed. You will be observed for a brief period following the sedation.

If you feel sick or nauseated, we will have crackers, granola bars, juice, water and gingerale to help provide relief.

Are there any reasons I could not use it?

Yes: you cannot use it if you:

-cannot hold your own facemask;

-have pernicious anemia or a B12 deficiency for which you take B12 supplements;

-have consumed any mind altering substances 2 hours prior to self-administration including but are not limited to: marijuana, alcohol, benzodiazepines, narcotics, etc.

- Have one of a very few other rare medical conditions which a Maitri provider will assess when they speak with you.

Please call our Triage nurses at 802-862-7338 with any additional questions.