

Ketamine Sedation in Children



WHAT IS PROCEDURAL SEDATION?

Procedural sedation is when we use medication to help your child stay calm and relaxed during a procedure (treatment). It reduces any anxiety, pain, and unpleasant memories your child might have of a procedure.

WHAT MEDICATION WILL BE USED?

The medication that we use is called Ketamine. It causes sedation (sleepiness and relaxation) in patients who need a brief painful or unpleasant procedure. It lasts for about half an hour.

Ketamine is injected into a vein through a drip or, less commonly, into a muscle.

When your child is sedated, they can appear awake but they are not aware of their surroundings. They may drool saliva, have watering of the eyes and may breathe loudly. Occasionally they can make random movements with their body or have twitching movements of their eyes, but they are not aware of what's going on.

IS IT DIFFERENT FROM GENERAL ANAESTHESIA?

Yes. Unlike general anaesthesia, your child does not stop breathing and they do not need a mask or breathing tube to breathe for them.

SAFETY AND SIDE EFFECTS?

Ketamine is very safe when used appropriately. Less than 1 in 100 children will have a serious side-effect. Rarely, some patients will need help with their breathing while they are sedated. In 0.02% of cases your child may need to be given a general anaesthetic with a breathing tube placed in their windpipe to help their breathing.

Occasionally, your child might have bad dreams either when they are sedated or afterwards. This only lasts a for a short time and has no lasting effects on your child. It can help your child if you encourage them to imagine positive things before the injection. A calm manner and distraction with music, bubbles, toys etc. can also be helpful.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO RECOVER FROM SEDATION?

Usually it will take 1-2 hours for your child to fully recover. During this time, he/she will be closely monitored by trained staff to make sure they have a smooth recovery. Please do not try to waken up your child early.

It is common for your child to vomit after the procedure, but this should settle quickly. Once your child is alert and has normal vital signs (heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing), you can take him/her home.

WHAT TO DO AFTERWARDS?

Your child might be slightly sleepy or clumsy afterwards. They should be closely supervised for the first 8 hours after discharge from hospital. For the next 24 hours, they should not:

- ❖ Get involved in strenuous or sporting activities.
- ❖ Use play equipment such as monkey bars, climbing frames etc.

Do let your child sleep, and eat and drink only small amounts to reduce the risk of vomiting.

If you have any concerns that your child may be having problems that are linked to the sedation that they have received, please contact your local Emergency Department. You can discuss the issues with a senior doctor or nurse.

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