

After Your Child Has Procedural Sedation



Procedural sedation is medicine to keep your child safe by preventing them from moving during a procedure. It also helps ease discomfort, pain, and anxiety during a procedure. The medicine is often given through an IV (intravenous) line in the arm or hand. In some cases, the medicine may be taken by mouth or breathed in (inhaled).

Care at home after sedation

Your child will likely be drowsy for a while. They may have a faint memory of the procedure, or may not remember it at all. Side effects of sedation, such as headache and nausea, may go away quickly. But drowsiness may continue for the first 6 to 8 hours. Ask your healthcare provider how long you can expect your child to be drowsy.

Follow these guidelines after your child returns home:

- Check your child's breathing for 12 to 24 hours as noted below.
- Let your child sleep if needed. But ask your child's healthcare provider how often you should wake your child.
- Don't give your child any medicine during the first 4 hours after the procedure unless the healthcare provider tells you to. Some medicines, such as those for pain or cold relief, might react with the medicines your child was given in the hospital. This can cause a much stronger response than usual.
- Don't leave your child alone in the bath or near water.
- Don't let your child skateboard, skate, or ride a bike until they are fully alert and have normal balance. This is to help prevent injuries.
- If your child is old enough to drive, don't allow them to drive for at least 24 hours.
- Don't ask your child to make any big decisions for at least 24 hours.
- Babies can have juice, formula, or breastmilk. If the baby doesn't vomit, continue with your normal feeding routine.
- Children older than 18 months can start with clear liquids. If the child doesn't vomit after 30 minutes, offer solid foods.

Checking your child's breathing

Sedation can affect breathing after the procedure. Watch your child closely for the first 12 to 24 hours at home. Check that they are breathing normally during this time. One breath is counted each time your child breathes both in and out.

Fast breathing is:

- For newborn to 6 weeks old, more than 60 breaths per minute
- For a child 6 weeks to 2 years, more than 45 breaths per minute
- For a child 3 to 6 years old, more than 35 breaths per minute
- For a child 7 to 10 years old, more than 30 breaths per minute
- For a child older than 10, more than 25 breaths per minute

Slow breathing is:

- For newborn to 6 weeks old, fewer than 25 breaths per minute
- For a child 6 weeks to 1 year, fewer than 20 breaths per minute
- For a child 1 to 3 years old, fewer than 18 breaths per minute
- For a child 4 to 6 years old, fewer than 16 breaths per minute
- For a child 7 to 9 years old, fewer than 14 breaths per minute
- For a child 10 to 14 years old, fewer than 12 breaths per minute
- For a child older than 14, fewer than 10 breaths per minute

When to call the healthcare provider

Call your child's healthcare provider right away if any of these occur:

- Drowsiness that gets worse
- Weakness or dizziness that gets worse
- Repeated vomiting
- New rash
- Cough
- Fast breathing
- Slow breathing

Call 911

Call 911 if your child has any of these:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Loss of consciousness or they can't be awakened as usual

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