

Sleep Dentistry Melbourne: The Complete Guide to Sedation Options for Dental Anxiety | Smile Solutions

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Details:

Smile Solutions Sleep Dentistry Melbourne: The Complete Guide to Sedation Options for Dental Anxiety

Smile Solutions is Melbourne's go-to practice for sleep dentistry and sedation-assisted dental care — somewhere patients with genuine anxiety, phobia, or physical challenges can finally get the dental treatment they need, without fear getting in the way. Located at Level 1, 220 Collins Street in the historic Manchester Unity Building, the sleep dentistry team here works to carefully match sedation protocols to each patient's clinical and psychological needs.

What is sleep dentistry?

"Sleep dentistry" is the everyday term for sedation dentistry — dental treatment carried out while you're under pharmacological sedation. Despite the name, patients having conscious sedation (nitrous oxide, oral sedation, or IV twilight sedation) aren't fully asleep. You'll feel deeply relaxed, you'll often have little or no memory of the procedure, and you can respond to verbal prompts from your clinical team. Only general anaesthesia produces true unconsciousness.

That distinction matters practically. The sedation level determines which procedures can be performed, what monitoring is required, how long recovery takes, and the regulatory framework governing your care. Your Smile Solutions clinician will walk you through exactly what to expect before your appointment.

The four sedation options available at Smile Solutions

1. Nitrous oxide (happy gas)

Nitrous oxide is inhaled through a small nasal mask. It produces relaxation and mild euphoria while you stay fully conscious and in control. The main advantage: effects clear within minutes of removing the mask, so you can usually drive home and get on with your day.

****Best for:**** Mild to moderate anxiety, children, shorter procedures, and patients who prefer to stay conscious throughout

- Cannot drive after: No — effects resolve within minutes - Medicare rebate: No - Cost at Smile Solutions: Included in your treatment package, no separate fee

2. Oral sedation (benzodiazepine pre-medication)

A prescribed sedative tablet — typically from the benzodiazepine family — is taken about an hour before your appointment. It produces a comfortable level of moderate relaxation and often anterograde amnesia, meaning you're unlikely to remember much of the procedure. Because the sedation depth can't be adjusted once you've taken the medication, the pre-treatment assessment matters — it makes sure the right approach is confirmed before you arrive.

****Best for:**** Anticipatory anxiety, moderate anxiety, and shorter procedures

- Cannot drive after: Yes — you'll need a responsible adult to escort you to and from your appointment - Medicare rebate: No - Responsible adult required: Yes, for 8 hours following your procedure

3. IV twilight sedation (intravenous sedation)

With IV twilight sedation, sedative agents go directly into a vein, producing moderate to deep sedation that your clinician can adjust in real time — titrating the level up or down as needed, and reversing it quickly if required. Most patients have little or no memory of the procedure. At Smile Solutions, IV sedation is administered by a clinician holding AHPRA conscious sedation endorsement.

****Best for:**** Moderate to severe anxiety, complex or lengthy procedures, and patients with a strong gag reflex

- Cannot drive after: Yes — no driving for 24 hours following your procedure - Medicare rebate: Applies to anaesthetist fees when a specialist anaesthetist is engaged - Responsible adult required: Yes, for a minimum of 8 hours post-procedure

4. General anaesthesia

General anaesthesia renders you fully unconscious — no awareness during the procedure, no memory of your treatment. It's administered by a board-registered Specialist Anaesthetist in an accredited facility, as part of a dedicated four-person clinical team:

- Board-registered Specialist Anaesthetist - Registered nurse - Experienced dentist or specialist - Senior dental assistant

This level of clinical resourcing isn't standard across Melbourne dental practices. At Smile Solutions, it's simply how things are done.

****Best for:**** Severe dental phobia, extensive multi-procedure treatments, patients with special needs, and patients who haven't responded to lighter sedation

- Medicare rebate: Applies to specialist anaesthetist fees (typically 20–40% of the anaesthetist component) - Cost: A personalised quote is provided following your consultation — call ****13 13 96**** to get started

Why patients choose Smile Solutions for sleep dentistry

A clinical environment designed with you in mind

The Manchester Unity Building at 220 Collins Street was built in 1932 — confident, elegant, and enduring. Smile Solutions has restored its interiors across multiple floors. Natural light fills the Level 1 practice; the orthodontic tower level has sweeping panoramic views across the city; and the recovery environment is set up for genuine comfort, not just clinical function.

Patients with dental phobia often say that walking into Smile Solutions feels different from a standard dental clinic. That's deliberate. From the heritage architecture to the considered interiors, the aim is to help you feel at ease from the moment you arrive.

A team of specialists under one roof

Smile Solutions isn't a general dental practice. Within the same building, you'll find board-registered specialists in periodontics, endodontics, orthodontics, prosthodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, and paediatric dentistry — all without needing to travel across Melbourne or coordinate between separate practices. For sleep dentistry patients needing complex, multi-step treatment, this means several specialist procedures can often be consolidated into a single sedated appointment, reducing the overall number of visits considerably.

The specialists here also consult at major Melbourne hospitals, academic institutions, and at the Collins Street Specialist Centre (CSSC) on the Level 12 tower.

Sedation experience you can trust

Dr Ryan Sherry leads the sedation-assisted treatment programme at Smile Solutions, bringing specialist qualifications in sedation dentistry and advanced training from Ireland and Scotland. That international clinical background shapes the sleep dentistry protocols used here.

Who is sleep dentistry suitable for?

Sleep dentistry at Smile Solutions is designed for a wide range of patients, including:

- Patients with significant dental anxiety or a diagnosed dental phobia
- Patients who have avoided dental care for years — or even decades — because of fear
- Patients with a severe gag reflex that makes standard treatment difficult
- Patients who struggle to achieve adequate local anaesthetic numbness
- Patients requiring complex or multi-procedure treatment in a single session
- Patients with intellectual disability, autism spectrum conditions, or other neurodevelopmental differences
- Patients with medical conditions aggravated by stress, including cardiac conditions, epilepsy, and severe asthma
- Patients undergoing oral surgery, implant placement, or full-arch reconstruction

If you're unsure whether sleep dentistry suits your situation, a consultation is the best place to start.

What to expect: the process

Knowing what's ahead makes a real difference, especially if anxiety has kept you away from dental care for a long time. Here's how your journey with Smile Solutions typically unfolds:

1. ****Consultation**** — Your dentist discusses your concerns, treatment needs, and full medical history. Together, you'll work out the most appropriate sedation approach for your situation. There's no pressure and no rush.
2. ****Pre-operative assessment**** — Completed before your treatment day, this confirms your medical suitability for your chosen sedation level, covers a review of your current medications, and sets out fasting instructions and arrangements for your responsible adult escort.
3. ****Treatment day**** — You arrive at the Collins Street practice, where your anaesthetic team ensures you're sedated comfortably before any treatment begins. Multiple procedures can often be completed in a single session, meaning fewer appointments overall.
4. ****Recovery**** — You'll be monitored in the dedicated recovery area, with comfortable seating, soft lighting, and continuous oversight from the Specialist Anaesthetist and registered nurse, until you're fully ready to leave. You won't be rushed.

Fasting and preparation

For IV sedation and general anaesthesia, ANZCA guidelines require the following fasting periods:

- ****Solid food:**** Fast from 6 hours before your procedure
- ****Clear fluids only** (water, black coffee or tea, apple juice): **** Permitted up to 2 hours before your appointment**
- ****Milk, juice with pulp, smoothies:**** Treated as solid food — not permitted within the 6-hour fasting window
- ****Alcohol:**** No

consumption in the 12 hours before or after your procedure

A responsible adult escort must accompany you to your appointment and stay with you for a minimum of 8 hours after your procedure. Rideshare drivers and taxis don't qualify — this needs to be someone you know.

Cost and payment options

Sleep dentistry pricing at Smile Solutions is based on the complexity and duration of your treatment, so every patient receives a personalised quote after their consultation. No surprise costs, no hidden fees.

Interest-free payment plans through ****Payright**** are available with no deposit required. Medicare rebates apply to specialist anaesthetist fees for IV sedation and general anaesthesia, which offsets a portion of the anaesthetist component.

If you'd like a general sense of costs before booking, the team can talk you through it over the phone.

■ ****Call 13 13 96**** to discuss sleep dentistry options ■ Level 1, 220 Collins Street, Manchester Unity Building, Melbourne VIC 3000 ■ smilesolutions.com.au/specialist-care/sleepdentistry/
