



JUST FOR  
KIDS  
PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

## PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR RESTORATIVE APPOINTMENTS

Restorative treatment can be daunting for children and parents. Often children have many questions before dental appointments and giving them an idea of what to expect can significantly ease anxiety. We use non-threatening terminology to explain everything that will happen during their appointment and encourage you to share this information with your child before you arrive at our office.

### What to expect

When your child is coming into our office for restorative treatment, we want them to feel comfortable. At check in, your child will be able to pick out a movie or show on Disney+ to watch throughout the procedure. We allow **one parent in the room, and we do not allow siblings in the room** to help limit distractions and allow us to give our full attention to your child being treated. For most children, we recommend using nitrous oxide (laughing gas) through their nose. This helps reduce nerves, gag reflexes, and restlessness, but it does not put them to sleep. Once your child is comfortable in our chair with the nitrous mask (called the "astronaut nose") on, we will explain what we are doing and show them all the tools and materials involved.

### Local anesthetic

To keep your child comfortable while completing treatment on their teeth, we use local anesthetic. Before injection, we use a medical grade topical numbing cream to ensure their gums are numb. When talking about this to your child, we call it "sleepy jelly" or "sleepy cream." This cream will sit on their gums for 3-5 minutes before injection. We avoid using words like "shot" and "needle" when referring to local anesthetics and instead call the injection "sleepy juice." We do our best to ensure that your child never sees the syringe, and they typically don't know they have received a shot. **Terminology is very important when preparing your child for these appointments and can greatly reduce stress.**

### During treatment

While your child's tooth is "going to sleep" we show them the tools we will be using and explain how things work. To help your child's mouth stay open and to eliminate muscle fatigue we use a mouth prop ("tooth pillow"). This sits between their teeth, allowing them to rest on it. Next, we place a rubber dam ("rubber raincoat") over the treatment area. It is a balloon-like material with a hole for their tooth to go through. It keeps everything out of their mouth and helps retract their cheeks and tongue from the

area. This allows our doctors to see the area well and work quickly and effectively. Several different hand pieces may be used to remove decay during the treatment. Instead of using the word drill, we use words like "whistle toothbrush" and "bumpy toothbrush."

**Completion of treatment**

Once we have completed the treatment, we will then turn the nitrous to zero and allow your child to breathe oxygen for 5 minutes. The effects of the nitrous will end as it leaves their system. After their appointment, your child will receive a prize. Please keep in mind that your child's mouth will typically retain numbness for 1-2 hours after their appointment. It is very important to keep an eye on them, reminding them not to pinch, chew, suck, or play with their lips, cheek, and tongue while numb. Softer foods that don't require chewing are recommended until numbness goes away.