

Top 10 Critical Things You Should Know Before You Select a Sedation Dentist

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Sedation dentistry is a great option for patients with dental phobias, patients requiring large amounts of dental work, and patients who would just prefer to sleep through their appointment. However, sedation is a powerful tool, and you don't want to entrust your safety to just anyone. These guidelines can help you choose the practitioner who's right for you.

1. **Check the doctor's credentials.**

If the dentist offers oral conscious sedation, check to be sure that he or she has received training from the Dental Organization for Conscious Sedation (DOCS). For IV sedation, the dentist must be certified by the state as a specialist IV sedation dentist or oral surgeon. In addition, of course, you'll want to make sure the dentist is licensed through the state dental board.

2. **Experience is critical.**

Much like other people, dentists get better at things the more they do them. You'll benefit from the experience of a dentist who has been performing sedation dentistry on a regular basis for years. Ask how frequently the dentist performs procedures such as the one you're considering.

3. **Investigate the doctor's training.**

Most dental schools offer limited sedation training. Check that your dentist completed post-graduate training in sedation dentistry. Some types of sedation (for example, IV sedation or pediatric sedation) require advanced training and certification. In addition, the best sedation dentists regularly attend continuing education classes to stay up-to-date.

4. **Educate yourself on the various forms of sedation.**

Who you are and what you need done will determine which type of sedation dentistry is right for you. The more sedated you are, the greater the risks can be, and the more training a dentist needs to have. Sedation methods include inhalation anesthesia, which you may know as "laughing gas"; oral conscious sedation, which involves taking a sedative pill; intravenous sedation, where you're hooked up to an IV by a dentist with advanced training; and general anesthesia, which requires a trained anesthesiologist.

5. **Look for a practice that specializes in sedation dentistry.**

General and family dentists are capable of offering oral conscious sedation. However, you may be better served by someone who specializes in sedation dentistry. This is especially true if you have special dental needs or health problems.

6. **Start with a consultation.**

Going in for a consultation is a great way to learn more about a dentist and dental practice. Make sure the dentist examines your whole mouth and inquires about your

total health. Talk to the dentist before you commit to anything. Remember, it's your job to make an educated decision.

7. The dentist should care about your total health.

Though you're seeking dental treatment, you want a dentist who will pay attention to your overall health. Sedation dentistry is not the right choice for everyone. If you have any medical conditions or are taking medications, your dentist will need to know that prior to treatment.

8. Communication is key.

It's essential that you be able to talk to your dentist - and that your dentist will listen to you! There's a lot of dialogue that needs to go into an individual treatment plan. If you feel bullied, pressured, or rushed, then that's probably not the right dentist for you.

9. An honest dentist sets realistic expectations.

Watch out for doctors who promise more than they can deliver. You want a dentist who will tell you what can and cannot be done for you with sedation dentistry. You need to know how long the process will take, what you'll have to do, and any complications that could occur.

10. Make sure your informed consent is truly informed.

Prior to sedation, you'll be asked to review and sign an Informed Consent form. This will explain details about the procedure and associated risks. Your dentist should be more than willing to take the time to review the form with you and address any concerns you may have.