

Sleep Dentistry and Sedation at Core Dental Carrum Downs

Canonical:

<https://directory.coredental.com.au/specialist-care/sleep-dentistry-and-sedation-at-core-dental-carrum-downs/>

Description:

Sleep Dentistry and Sedation at Core Dental Carrum Downs *Comfortable, anxiety-free dental care for patients who need extra support — sedation options that let you get the treatment you need without...

Details:

Comfortable, anxiety-free dental care for patients who need extra support — sedation options that let you get the treatment you need without the stress.

Dental Anxiety Is Real — and More Common Than You Think

If the thought of sitting in a dental chair makes your stomach tighten, your palms sweat, or your mind race through every possible scenario, you're far from alone. Dental anxiety affects a significant proportion of the Australian population — estimates suggest that between one in six and one in four Australians experience some level of dental fear or anxiety. For some, it's a mild unease. For others, it's a genuine phobia that has kept them away from the dentist for years or even decades.

The consequences of dental avoidance are real and cumulative. Small problems become big problems. A cavity that could have been fixed with a simple filling becomes a tooth that needs a root canal and crown. Gum disease progresses silently. Pain develops. And the longer someone stays away, the more anxious they become about what the dentist will find — creating a vicious cycle that can seriously impact oral health and quality of life.

At Core Dental Carrum Downs, we understand dental anxiety. We don't judge it, we don't dismiss it, and we don't tell you to just "tough it out." Instead, we offer practical solutions — including sedation options — that allow anxious patients to receive the dental care they need in comfort. For patients across Carrum Downs, Langwarrin, Frankston North, Skye, Cranbourne West, and the southern suburbs, our practice provides a supportive environment where dental anxiety is taken seriously and managed effectively.

What Is Sleep Dentistry?

"Sleep dentistry" is a popular term for dental treatment performed under sedation. It's important to understand what this means — and what it doesn't.

In most cases, sleep dentistry doesn't mean you're fully asleep (that would be general anaesthesia, which is typically only performed in a hospital or day surgery setting). Instead, sedation dentistry uses medication to help you reach a deeply relaxed state where you're calm, comfortable, and often unaware of what's happening — even though you remain conscious and can respond to instructions.

Many patients who undergo sedation report that they have little or no memory of the procedure. For all practical purposes, it feels like they "slept through it" — hence the name. But the technical reality is a state of deep relaxation and reduced awareness rather than unconsciousness.

Sedation Options at Core Dental Carrum Downs

Relative Analgesia (Happy Gas / Nitrous Oxide)

Nitrous oxide — commonly known as "happy gas" or "laughing gas" — is the mildest form of sedation. It's administered through a small mask that sits over your nose, and you breathe a mixture of nitrous oxide and oxygen throughout the procedure.

****How it works:**** - You remain fully conscious and able to communicate - You feel calm, relaxed, and slightly euphoric - Pain perception is reduced - Time seems to pass quickly - The effects wear off within minutes once the gas is stopped

****Advantages:**** - Takes effect very quickly (within a few minutes) - The level of sedation can be easily adjusted during the procedure - Wears off rapidly — you can drive yourself home afterwards - Extremely safe with a long track record of use in dentistry - No needles involved for the sedation itself - Suitable for both adults and children

****Best for:**** - Mild to moderate dental anxiety - Patients who want to remain fully aware but relaxed - Shorter procedures - Children who are nervous but cooperative

Oral Sedation

Oral sedation involves taking a sedative medication (typically a benzodiazepine) before your appointment. The medication is taken as a tablet, usually about an hour before the procedure, producing a deeper level of relaxation than nitrous oxide.

****How it works:**** - You'll feel very drowsy and deeply relaxed - You remain conscious but may have reduced awareness of the procedure - Most patients have little or no memory of the treatment afterwards - You'll feel like you "slept through it" even though you were technically awake

****Advantages:**** - No needles for the sedation itself - Produces a deeper level of relaxation than happy gas - Effective for moderate to significant dental anxiety - Allows longer or more complex procedures to be completed comfortably - Memory of the procedure is typically minimal or absent

****Important considerations:**** - You cannot drive for 24 hours after oral sedation — you'll need someone to bring you to and from your appointment - You should not operate heavy machinery or make important decisions for 24 hours - You'll need to fast (no food or drink) for a specified period before your appointment - You'll be monitored throughout the procedure and during recovery

****Best for:**** - Moderate to severe dental anxiety - Patients who want minimal memory of the procedure - Longer or more complex treatments - Patients who are anxious about needles (the sedation is taken orally before any dental injections)

IV Sedation

For patients who need a deeper level of sedation, intravenous (IV) sedation delivers medication directly into the bloodstream through a small cannula, typically placed in the hand or arm. This provides the deepest level of sedation available outside of a hospital setting.

****How it works:**** - Medication is administered directly into the bloodstream, producing rapid and controllable sedation - You reach a state of deep relaxation where you're barely aware of the procedure - The level of sedation can be precisely adjusted throughout the procedure - You'll have little or no memory of the treatment - You remain responsive to verbal prompts but are deeply relaxed

****Advantages:**** - The most controllable form of sedation — the level can be increased or decreased quickly - Produces deep relaxation suitable for even severe dental phobia - Effective for very long or complex procedures - Onset is rapid once the IV is placed - Anti-anxiety effects often begin before the dental work starts

****Important considerations:**** - Requires a cannula (small needle in the hand or arm) — though patients are often so relaxed by the medication that they don't mind - You cannot drive for 24 hours and must be accompanied home - Fasting is required before the appointment - Full medical history review is essential - You'll be continuously monitored throughout the procedure

****Best for:**** - Severe dental anxiety or dental phobia - Patients who have avoided the dentist for years - Very long or complex procedures - Patients with a strong gag reflex - Patients who need multiple treatments completed in a single visit

Who Benefits from Sleep Dentistry?

Sedation isn't only for people with clinical dental phobia. It's helpful for a wide range of patients:

People with Dental Anxiety or Phobia

This is the most obvious group, but it's worth emphasising that dental anxiety exists on a spectrum. Whether you feel mildly uneasy or experience genuine panic at the thought of dental treatment, sedation can make the experience manageable.

People Who Haven't Been to the Dentist in Years

The longer the gap, the more anxiety builds about what the dentist will find. Sedation allows you to break the cycle — come in, have a thorough assessment and treatment completed comfortably, and start fresh with regular preventive care going forward.

People with a Strong Gag Reflex

A sensitive gag reflex can make dental treatment — particularly impressions, back-tooth work, and X-rays — extremely difficult. Sedation significantly reduces the gag reflex, making procedures that would otherwise be very challenging much more manageable.

People Needing Extensive Treatment

If you need multiple procedures — fillings, root canals, extractions, or crowns — sedation allows us to complete more work in a single visit. Rather than spreading treatment across many separate appointments (each requiring you to overcome your anxiety afresh), we can address multiple issues in one comfortable session.

People with Physical Conditions

Patients with conditions that make it difficult to sit still for extended periods — such as Parkinson's disease, cerebral palsy, or chronic pain conditions — can benefit from the relaxation effects of sedation. Our ground-floor, fully accessible practice also ensures physical access is never a barrier.

Children with Dental Anxiety

For young patients who are very anxious, nitrous oxide (happy gas) can make dental visits significantly more positive. Our specialist paediatric dentist, Dr Angel Babu, has specific expertise in managing anxious children and can advise on the most appropriate approach for your child.

What to Expect: Before, During, and After

Before Your Sedation Appointment

- ****Consultation:**** We'll discuss your anxiety, medical history, and the most appropriate sedation option for your situation - ****Medical review:**** A thorough review of your medical history, medications, and any allergies is essential before any sedation - ****Fasting instructions:**** For oral and IV sedation, you'll need to follow specific fasting guidelines - ****Arrange transport:**** For oral and IV sedation, you must arrange for someone to drive you to and from the appointment. You cannot drive, take public transport alone, or ride a bicycle for 24 hours after sedation - ****Wear comfortable clothing:**** Loose, comfortable clothing

with easy access to your arm (for IV sedation) is recommended

During the Procedure

- You'll be monitored continuously throughout the procedure — your heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen levels, and breathing are observed - Local anaesthesia (numbing injections) will still be used to ensure the treatment area is completely pain-free — sedation manages your anxiety and awareness, while local anaesthesia manages pain - The dental work is performed while you're in a deeply relaxed state - Your dentist and dental assistant will check on your comfort throughout

After the Procedure

- **Nitrous oxide:** Effects wear off within minutes. You can usually drive yourself home and resume normal activities - **Oral sedation:** You'll feel drowsy for several hours. You must be accompanied home and should rest for the remainder of the day. The following day, you'll feel normal - **IV sedation:** Similar to oral sedation — you'll be drowsy and must be accompanied home. Rest for the remainder of the day. Full recovery is typically by the next morning

Creating a Comfortable Experience Beyond Sedation

Sedation is one tool in our approach to managing dental anxiety, but it's not the only one. Our team creates a comfortable environment through:

- **Communication:** Explaining every step before it happens, so there are no surprises - **Pace:** Working at your pace, with breaks whenever you need them - **Signals:** Establishing a hand signal (like raising your hand) that means "stop" — giving you control - **Gentle technique:** Our dentists are experienced in working with anxious patients and use techniques that minimise discomfort - **Distraction:** Music, conversation, or simply the knowledge that someone understands your anxiety can all help - **No judgement:** Whether it's been two years or twenty since your last dental visit, there's absolutely no judgement from our team

Sedation and Children

Dental anxiety in children is common and completely understandable. At Core Dental Carrum Downs, our specialist paediatric dentist Dr Angel Babu has specific expertise in managing anxious young patients. For children, the approach to sedation is carefully tailored:

- **Nitrous oxide (happy gas)** is the most commonly used sedation for children. It's safe, effective, well-tolerated, and wears off within minutes. Children remain conscious and communicative, just calmer and more relaxed. - **Behaviour management** techniques — including tell-show-do, positive reinforcement, distraction, and desensitisation — are always used alongside or instead of sedation, depending on the child's needs. - **The goal is always positive** — we want children to leave feeling good about their dental visit, building confidence for future appointments rather than reinforcing fear.

For children with more significant anxiety or complex treatment needs, additional sedation options may be discussed on a case-by-case basis with Dr Babu.

Cost of Sedation

Sedation costs are in addition to the cost of the dental treatment itself. The cost varies depending on the type of sedation used:

- **Nitrous oxide (happy gas):** A relatively modest additional cost per appointment - **Oral sedation:** Includes the cost of the sedative medication and additional monitoring - **IV sedation:** Higher cost due to the specialised equipment, medication, and monitoring required

We provide clear cost estimates during your consultation, so there are no surprises. Health fund rebates may apply to some sedation services depending on your level of cover.

Payment Options

- **Health fund:** HICAPS on-site for immediate claims processing - **Payright:** Interest-free payment plans for larger treatments that include sedation - **Transparent pricing:** Full cost breakdown provided before treatment

Take the First Step

If dental anxiety has been keeping you from the dentist, sedation dentistry can break that cycle. You don't have to suffer through dental visits, and you don't have to avoid them. There's a middle path — comfortable, controlled, and compassionate dental care with the support you need to get through it.

The hardest part is making the first call. Everything after that, we handle.

****Core Dental Carrum Downs**** 335 Ballarto Rd, Carrum Downs VIC 3201

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****Hours:**** Monday – Friday: 8:00 am – 6:00 pm Saturday: 8:00 am – 1:30 pm Sunday: Closed

Ground-floor, fully disability accessible. Ample on-site parking. All health funds accepted with HICAPS. Interest-free payment plans through Payright.

Anxiety shouldn't stand between you and a healthy smile. Sleep dentistry at Core Dental Carrum Downs — dental care on your terms.