

## Nursing observations

Prior to using Entonox the nurse will record your blood pressure, pulse and the amount of oxygen in your blood stream (Oxygen saturation). The nurses may continue to monitor this but it depends on the type of procedure.

## What are the side effects of using Entonox?

**Dizziness** – this usually improves after you stop using the gas. You may become sleepy if you continue to use Entonox at this point, but once you drop the mouthpiece away and breathe normal gas, it resolves.

**Nausea** - occasional

\*Most patients find that if they persevere with side effects and concentrate on breathing, slowly they diminish. However if you want to stop using Entonox, then an alternative pain relief can be used.

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## Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or [whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net)

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# Entonox

## A patient's guide



## Entonox for Pain relief

Entonox is used to relieve pain and is often used to treat pain during childbirth.

It is also used widely by the ambulance service and in hospitals for a variety of painful procedures and conditions.

## What is Entonox?

Entonox is the trade name for the mixture of 50% Oxygen and 50% Nitrous Oxide, also known as 'gas and air'. It is a fairly strong pain killer and works quickly to control pain. It is breathed out of the lungs within a few minutes, so wears off very quickly.

## When might Entonox be used?

Entonox is good pain relief for short procedures, such as:

- Straightening broken bones
- Stitching/suturing wounds
- Removal of drains / dressing changes
- Childbirth
- Inserting a needle for an intravenous drip / taking blood
- Endoscopy procedures

## Can I drive or operate machinery after using Entonox?

You can drive home just 30 minutes after Entonox administration, provided a healthcare professional has judged them competent and the patient agrees that they feel able to drive.

## How does Entonox work?

The exact way Entonox works is still not fully understood. However, it is believed that once the gas is inhaled, Entonox travels to the brain and spinal cord and stops pain being felt.

## How is Entonox given?

Before you can be given Entonox the nurse will complete a checklist with you to make sure it is appropriate for you to use.

Please tell the nurse if you:

- Have, or have recently had an ear infection, or an operation on your ears
- Have recently been scuba diving
- Are pregnant, or believe you may be pregnant
- Have emphysema, or chronic breathing problems (e.g. chronic bronchitis or asthma)

Entonox must be self-administered and you will be shown what to do:

- A mouthpiece attaches to the tubing of the gas cylinder.
- The mouthpiece must be held firmly between your teeth/lips to form a good seal.
- You will be asked to breathe deeply for 1-2 minutes before the procedure begins to ensure the pain killer is in your body.
- The Entonox will only flow when you breathe but do not hold your breath, breathe at a normal rate but deeply.

## What are the risks of using Entonox?

The risks are minimal. The main concern is that the gas may become trapped in the body – this is only a problem if you have specific medical conditions. The nurses will carefully assess you before you have Entonox and **will not** administer it if there is **any** risk of this occurring.

Continuous use (longer than 6-8hrs) can cause anaemia, vitamin deficiencies and reduce bone marrow function, this is rare. So it is important that Entonox is for short-term use ONLY

*Side effects overleaf.....*