



Open-ended Dental Care Under General Anesthesia

*Helping you understand your procedure
and the consent form*

► **Please read this
handout before
reading and signing
the consent form.**

This handout provides information about open-ended dental care under general anesthesia, including risks, benefits, and alternatives. This material is in addition to the discussions you have with your doctors. It is important that you fully understand this information, so please read this handout thoroughly.

About the Procedure

When a patient is asleep in the operating room, we cannot awaken them to discuss our diagnostic findings and recommendations. Therefore we must obtain consent for all expected procedures. Treatment may include X-rays, an examination, cleaning, periodontal (gum) therapy, dental restorations (fillings, root canals, crowns, bridges, dentures, etc.), and removal/extraction of teeth.

Note that in severe or difficult cases, removal of all remaining teeth is sometimes necessary. Our practice is to discuss all of our findings and recommendations with the patient's representative, and get their agreement on our suggested treatment plan.

General anesthesia (GA), including a breathing tube through your nose to your lungs, will be given before your dental care procedure. Local anesthesia may or may not be used as well. When you are under GA, you will not be aware of what is happening to you.

Benefits

You might receive the benefits listed below from this procedure. The general chance of having these results happen is about 95%. Doctors cannot guarantee that you will receive any of these benefits. Only you can decide if the benefits are worth the risks. Benefits may include:

- Eliminate pain and infection.
- Restore your mouth to a state of health.
- Remove teeth and/or diseased gum tissues that are considered harmful to your health.

What are the possible risks and complications from this procedure?

Before you have this procedure, you need to understand the associated risks. No procedure is completely risk-free. These risks are well-recognized, but there may also be risks not included in this list that are unforeseen by your doctors. Risks may include:

- General risks, which apply to all types of surgery and to procedures where a blood vessel, body cavity, or other internal tissue is entered with a needle, tube, or similar device. Such procedures are called *invasive* procedures. These risks, which can be serious and even life-threatening, include bleeding, infection, and damage to surrounding tissues, vessels, nerves, or organs.

Risks specific to any necessary surgical procedure include:

- Pain.
- Bleeding (oozing is normal).
- Bruising
- Swelling (cold and puffy).
- Infection, which may include fever, hot/hard swelling, not feeling well.
- Damage to adjacent teeth and/or restorations
- Delayed healing, requiring daily dressing changes.
- Hole between mouth and sinus, requiring more surgery.
- Fractured tooth particles that may remain in your body.
- Irritation to nerves that may cause temporary or permanent numbness, or altered sensation.
- Stiff jaw muscles and difficulty opening your mouth for a time.
- Change in how your upper and lower teeth fit together.
- If your jawbone is weak, it may fracture.
- Normal risks of anesthesia and sedation, which include:
 - Dental damage.
 - Nerve damage as a risk of surgical/anesthesia positioning.
 - Possible serious damage to vital organs such as the brain, heart, lung, liver, and kidney. In some cases, this may result in paralysis, cardiac arrest, and/or brain death.

Questions?

Call 206-598-4277

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Dental Clinic:
206-598-4277

- Possible side effects from medicines, including racing heart, inability to get numb, and/or anxiety.
- Possible problems with recovery, including delays in waking up, nausea, vomiting, prolonged groggy sensations, and sore throat.

What are the alternatives to this procedure?

You may decide not to have this procedure. Besides doing nothing, the alternative treatments are:

- Dental care with intravenous (IV) conscious sedation.
- Dental care with oral sedatives and/or nitrous oxide, also called “laughing gas.”
- Dental care using only local anesthesia.

There are risks and benefits to these treatment alternatives. Please discuss the details with your doctor, but these include:

Risks of not using general anesthesia for your dental care:

- The alternative sedation or anesthesia may not work well enough to complete the dental care.
- In most cases, you will need to make several visits to complete the dental care.
- You may have mild to severe anxiety or pain during treatment.

Benefits of not using general anesthesia for your dental care:

- Sedation may work as well as general anesthesia.
- Sedation is less expensive and can be done in our dental office.

What follow-up care is needed?

If you have any questions about this procedure or the risks, benefits or alternatives to this procedure, talk to your doctor before signing any consent forms.

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