



1. Local anaesthesia

There are two methods of inducing **local anaesthesia**.

- Syringe and hypodermic needle method
 - This is the most common method of controlling the discomfort of dental treatment.
 - An anaesthetic cream or gel is first used to numb the gum, and to make the injection almost painless.
 - The anaesthetic solution is injected into the tissues, after which the treatment can be painless.
 - The lips, tongue and cheek may also be numbed, as they share a common nerve supply.
 - The face, lip and tongue may feel swollen although they do not actually swell.
 - Do not eat while you still feel numb, because you may bite your lip or cheek.
 - Avoid hot drinks while your mouth is numb as you could burn yourself without realising it.
 - The numbness lasts for 1-4 hours.
- High pressure jet method
 - This special device delivers the anaesthetic solution under pressure, without using a needle.
 - It may be used as the sole means of inducing **anaesthesia**, or to numb the gum before a conventional injection.

2. Conscious sedation

- This is a method of reducing the anxiety and pain of dental procedures.
- There is no loss of consciousness.
- There are two methods of inducing conscious sedation:
 - Inhalation sedation
 - The patient inhales a very safe concentration of **nitrous oxide** and oxygen and feels very relaxed. Pain is greatly diminished.
 - A pleasant floating feeling is experienced, hence the name "happy gas" given to nitrous oxide.
 - Inhalation sedation is sometimes used together with a **local anaesthetic**, resulting in a completely pain free treatment.
 - Normal activities can be resumed shortly after inhalation sedation has ended.
 - Intravenous sedation
 - This is administered by injection into a vein in the arm.
 - There is no loss of consciousness, but anxiety and pain are greatly diminished to allow a pain free session.
 - There may be no memory of what happened during the treatment.
 - Intravenous sedation results in drowsiness after the treatment. It is therefore necessary to be accompanied on the way home.



- Driving is not advised for at least 24 hours.

3. General anaesthesia

- General Anaesthesia allows the dentist to work on an unconscious patient.
- It may be necessary when the treatment is particularly painful or difficult.
- If the patient's emotional or behavioural problems make it impossible for the dentist to carry out the treatment in the surgery, a general anaesthetic can solve the problem.
- General anaesthesia should only be used in a hospital or similar environment, and be administered by a specialist anaesthetist.

4. Analgesics or pain relievers

- An analgesic is a pain relieving substance. It does not cure the dental problem that causes the pain, but reduces the feeling of the pain.
- It is used as short-term measure to ease pain, before and after dental treatment.
- Some dental procedures can result in a degree of pain and discomfort after treatment. Pain relievers play a part in making the treatment more comfortable.
- The main cause of severe dental pain is an inflammation of the nerves and blood vessels, both in and around the tooth. It is usually associated with tooth decay.
- Anti-inflammatory drugs such as Aspirin and Ibuprofen are effective for such pain.
- The most commonly used analgesics are Acetaminophen (also called Paracetamol or Tylenol), Aspirin, Codeine and Ibuprofen.
- It is advisable that analgesics should only be taken with the knowledge and approval of your doctor or dentist. This is particularly important if you are taking other medications as well.
- Many analgesic preparations can be bought without a prescription, but caution is nevertheless necessary.
- Several analgesics are very often combined within a single tablet or capsule.

You must be aware of the ingredients of your pain-relieving tablets or capsules, and not exceed the recommended dose.