



COLLEGE OF
DENTAL HYGIENISTS
OF MANITOBA

POSITION STATEMENT: Nitrous Oxide/Oxygen Conscious Sedation

February 2021

The College of Dental Hygienists of Manitoba, Professional Practice Committee is responsible for developing professional resource documents for dental hygienists. Council approves these documents, of which, the purpose is to explain, enhance, add, or guide dental hygiene practice in accordance with The Dental Hygienists Act and Regulations. It is the responsibility of the dental hygienist to understand and comply with these documents.

The College of Dental Hygienists of Manitoba's Position Statement for Nitrous Oxide/Oxygen Conscious Sedation

Purpose

This position statement is to inform registrants of the College of Dental Hygienists of Manitoba (CDHM) about the current regulations on the administration of nitrous oxide sedation.

Background

Nitrous oxide sedation (N₂O/O₂) is commonly used for the management of anxiety and mild pain. It is a safe means of conscious sedation when properly administered.¹

Position

The CDHM **does not** permit administration or monitoring of nitrous oxide/oxygen conscious sedation by registered dental hygienists. This decision is based on legislation and the lack of comprehensive educational instruction. There are numerous considerations that must be attended to, which ensure the health and safety of a client undergoing nitrous oxide/oxygen conscious sedation. Therefore, the administration of nitrous oxide must be provided by a licensed dentist who is registered to administer nitrous oxide/oxygen conscious sedation with the Manitoba Dental Association (MDA).

Applicable Legislation

According to the Dental Hygienist's Regulation, nitrous oxide sedation is not listed as an Included Practice.²

Registered dental hygienists may provide care to clients undergoing nitrous oxide/oxygen conscious sedation provided that the following requirements are met. The MDA outlines the requirements of dentists administering nitrous oxide/oxygen conscious sedation in the MDA Act Bylaw 27-94. Section I.D.1. of the bylaw states that "Staff other than licensed dentists must not administer nitrous oxide/oxygen sedation, and the dentist must be in the room at all times during the administration."³ It further states in section I.B.2.e. that "All licensed dentists administering nitrous oxide/oxygen sedation must register with the Manitoba Dental Association, for their own medico-legal protection."

The health and safety of clients is paramount throughout the provision of care, and registered dental hygienists have an ethical obligation to decline treatment and/or cease care if these requirements are not met. Registered dental hygienists are guided by the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association Code of Ethics principle of Accountability, and each of the seven responsibilities.⁴ Registered dental hygienists are not permitted to initiate, monitor, or terminate the nitrous oxide/oxygen sedation process.

According to the CDHM Practice Standards, dental hygienists:⁵

- 1.1. Adhere to current jurisdictional legislation, regulations, codes of ethics, practice standards, guidelines, and policies relevant to the profession and practice setting.

The CDHM outlines competencies which are related to the delivery of care for clients being provided nitrous oxide sedation.⁶ These include, but are not limited to:

- Assesses the need for management of client pain, anxiety and discomfort (e.g. local anaesthetic, anti-anxiety medication, nitrous oxide/oxygen conscious sedation, support, etc.) (Assessment #49)
- Assesses the need for consultation and referrals within the health care delivery system (Assessment #54)
- Assesses practice environment for safety risks (i.e., for clients, the dental hygienist and others) (Assessment #59)
- Demonstrates knowledge of and compliance with the CDHM Standards of Practice throughout the dental hygiene process of care (e.g. Practice Standards, Code of Ethics, guidelines, etc.) (Assessment #65)
- Demonstrates awareness of and compliance with the policies of the practice environment (e.g. infection control procedures, safety guidelines, emergency preparedness, etc.) (Assessment #67)

None of these competencies permit the administration or monitoring of nitrous oxide sedation.

*This position statement reflects current knowledge and is subject to periodic review and revisions with on-going research.

References

1. Clark M, Brunick A. Handbook of nitrous oxide and oxygen sedation. Mosby; 2003. p.3.
2. Dental Hygienists' Regulation. The Dental Hygienists Act C.C.S.M. c. D34. 80/2009. 2008. Available from: http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/regs/current/_pdf-regs.php?reg=80/2008
3. The Utilization of Nitrous Oxide/Oxygen Sedation, Intravenous/Intramuscular Conscious Sedation and General Anaesthesia Techniques. The Manitoba Dental Association Act Bylaw 27-94. 2000. Available from: [https://www.manitobadentist.ca/user_assets/Nitrous%20Oxide %20IV-IM%20Sedation_ANAESTHESIA.pdf](https://www.manitobadentist.ca/user_assets/Nitrous%20Oxide%20IV-IM%20Sedation_ANAESTHESIA.pdf)
4. Dental Hygienists' Code of Ethics. The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association. 2012. Available from: https://www.cdha.ca/pdfs/Profession/Resources/Code_of_Ethics_EN_web.pdf
5. CDHM Practice Standards. College of Dental Hygienists of Manitoba. 2007.
6. CDHM Competencies. College of Dental Hygienists of Manitoba. 2007.