

## Sedation Dentistry – A Dream Come True!

*“The Little Known Secrets of Pain & Anxiety Free Dental Care That 97% of the Population Doesn’t Know About!”*

- Do you fear going to the dentist? Or getting shots?
- Do you gag easily?
- Are you embarrassed by your dental problems?
- Worried about being lectured to, or talked down to?
- Are you tired of using one excuse after another for NOT being healthy? Or having a confident smile?

If this describes you or someone you love, this chapter will explain an important smile and even life-saving message that is allowing many for the first time to enjoy Pain-Free and Anxiety-Free dental care!

The truth is that people who are afraid of going to the dentist or who have had bad experiences earlier in their life, often avoid dental care and don’t get the care they want or need. This is true for millions of people. They will even put up with the most horrible tooth aches, broken teeth and infection before being forced to go to the dental chair. The problem is that this simply makes matters worse.

Their health suffers. Their careers suffer. And their social life suffers. Their oral health problems often spiral out of control and continue to get worse year after year – all while adding to the cost and impact of fixing these problems.

If you’re a member of this ‘club’, this information will be a welcome breath of fresh air. In fact, it may be the best news you’ve come across.

If fear has kept you from going to the dentist, it’s time to come back! Despite your past experiences, dentistry doesn’t have to be scary – if you know how to deal with it. Today’s safe sedation techniques offer relaxed, safe treatments – while you are comfortably relaxed. And the bonus – the next day you will literally remember little if anything!

Just imagine how great that is! Your teeth, smile and health can be restored while you relax deeply or even fall asleep. Fix years of problems in just one or two visits – all while enjoying safe dental sedation.

You are probably a good candidate for conscious sedation if ...

- You start to get anxious when someone even mentions “The Dentist”
- Bad experiences in the past with dental care
- It’s hard to get numb
- It’s been a long time since you were at the dentist
- Bad gag reflex

### How Does Sedation Dentistry Help?

- Conscious sedation allows deep deep relaxation
- Amnesia – have little to NO memory of your dental visit
- Pain free – anesthesia works much better
- Anxiety free – eliminates anxiety
- No gagging – suppresses gag reflex
- Accomplishing multiple appointments worth of work in one or two appointments

- A fear of needles and shots
- Have complex dental problems that need comprehensive solutions
- You have a busy schedule and the treatment can be completed in one or two visits
- A hatred of noises, smells, and tastes associated with dental care
- Embarrassment about your teeth

Sadly, only a small percentage of dentists in the country are trained and qualified in oral conscious sedation. Our patients often travel many miles to be treated using this safe, comfortable and proven method of care.

Why aren't more dentists doing "Sedation Dentistry"? Good question!

Several years ago, a sedation technique was developed and introduced to our profession which only a relatively small number of dentists now use. It has absolutely changed the lives of many people who have been fearful about getting the dental care they needed.

Before diving into some of the details, let me first give some background and context about why I use this amazing advancement to help my patients. There are two experiences I share that continues to guide my thinking and approach in helping people with "dental phobias".

**FIRST** – as a senior dental student at the University of Washington – one of the finest dental schools around – I was finishing up and needed one elective to fulfill graduation requirements. Most of my classmates were choosing dental related classes or research projects.

I had already completed one hospital dentistry rotation - dealing with after-hours dental concerns and emergencies encountered in the University Hospital, when I was offered a general anesthesia rotation in the University Hospital Operating Rooms. When I learned about it I just knew I had to do it. I was selected from a small pool of qualified students. Looking back, I must say that this was one of the highlights of my education.

Except for being part of some extensive jaw surgeries, it was totally outside the realm of anything dental. I found myself totally immersed for two solid months, all day every day, performing anesthesia services of all kinds on a wide array of patient surgeries, working alongside anesthesiologists, nurse anesthetists, and attending physicians.

I started hundreds of IV's, intubated dozens and dozens of patients for general anesthesia, and managed and monitored the anesthesia for hundreds of surgeries. It was NOTHING like what was happening in dental school! I almost felt like I was cheating – getting some special privileged education and experience that only few dental students get to experience unless they specialize in oral surgery.

Dental care in the "real" world of dentistry is obviously nothing like a hospital operating room setting. But - I couldn't help but keep thinking ... "Wouldn't it be wonderful if fearful dental patients could just be put to sleep to have their work done! Wake up – and viola! Done! Pretty smile – fixed up mouth and slept through it all?"

Truth is it just doesn't work like that. At least not without using an expensive surgery center – and even then, it's complicated! And professional regulations and education requirements make it even more complicated.

**SECOND** – Fast forward several years ...

I'm in a study club with a dear friend and colleague in Atlanta and he is telling me about new sedation protocols he was using in his out-patient office setting to do almost the same thing I had long dreamed of doing, but without all the operating room involvement, deep anesthesia or worries.

## **Benefits of Sedation Dentistry**

It really works! You really can relax (even snooze) your way through dental appointments.

- ✓ **Safety:** It's safe! We use a very safe medication with a wide safety margin and specially designed for dental settings, along with constant monitoring to assure your safety and comfort.
- ✓ **It's Easy:** You take a small pill prior to treatment. That's it! No IVs or intravenous tubes or needles.
- ✓ **No Memory:** You'll have little or no memory of the appointment. You won't worry about sounds, sights or smells. Almost like it never happened – except for the fixed teeth and great smile!
- ✓ **Totally Numb:** People with trouble getting numb find sedation dentistry eliminates this problem.
- ✓ **Total Relaxation:** Relax for up to five to six hours after taking the pill, totally adjusted to fit your need.
- ✓ **Fast Care:** Multiple appointments can be done in as little as one visit - all while totally relaxed and comfortable.
- ✓ **No Gag:** Sedation stops gagging – cold!
- ✓ **TMJ Problems:** Sedation helps relax the jaw muscles making treatment more comfortable to the jaw joint and tight muscles.
- ✓ **Less Fatigue:** Sedation dentistry is not only safe, but it also reduces the fatigue of extended dental treatment requiring long visits.

I remember thinking – “Finally ... there’s safe and sane protocols, approved methods and medications that let qualified dentists treat fearful people who hated going to the dentist, and who could get all the dental work they needed, comfortably and while relaxed in an out-patient setting!”

I was hooked! I was so impressed that it wasn’t long before I took the extra training and made the move into what is today called “Sedation Dentistry”, bringing a safe and sane approach to Dental Fear to my practice and to patients from throughout Eastern Washington and Eastern Oregon.

Imagine erasing years of dental neglect, pain, worry, and ill-health – all in one visit with one “magical” pill. I was hooked! This is what I’d been hoping for since my days in the hospital operating rooms.

Within mere minutes, fearful people are calm, relaxed and worry free ... often falling asleep right during the dental procedure! They wake up not remembering much if any of the experience, and being very grateful and relieved that they had just experienced life-altering dental procedures fixing years of neglect and pain and that gave them back their confidence, smile and peace of mind – and even their life!

Patients who suffered their entire life - living in constant fear of even the slightest thought of needles, or even just the smell or sound of the dentist’s office, now have more confidence and had healthier beautiful smiles and stronger teeth than they could have ever imagined. All because of what occurred in just one dental visit in the dental office!

Men and women with the most awful fears and dental phobias leave saying it was the most pleasant and enjoyable experience they’ve ever had at “any” doctor’s office! Period.

Letters and comments like this are common place:

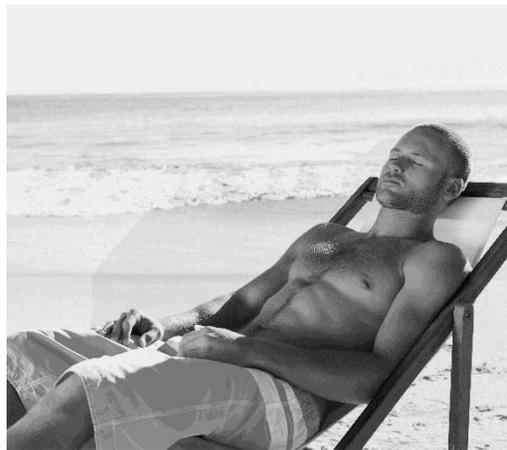
*“I put off going to the dentist for over 10 years, because of bad dental experiences I had as a kid at my dentist’s office. Because I put off going to the dentist, my teeth have become decayed, chipped, stained, and extremely embarrassing. I’ve always had bad breath and have always been embarrassed and self-conscious because of my teeth and embarrassed by my smile. But now I feel more attractive, confident, and healthier than ever before! Thank you, Dr. Ostler!”*

These people leave the dental office feeling great, and have a whole new view of going to the dentist. In fact, many of them were so thankful and thrilled with it all that they refer their family and friends and coworkers.

To me these results are nothing short of amazing – specially to see how it impacted and changed people’s lives. Their confidence soared. I’ve even seen careers saved and enhanced. Plus, dealing with the dental and oral disease is certainly impacting their general health (lowering risk for heart attacks, strokes, brain health - Alzheimer’s and dementia, and diabetes to name a few something called the “Oral Systemic Connection”).

**A real-life dental patient story will help to make these points.**

Susan and Kenneth ...



Sedation Dentistry - Like a Nap on the Beach!

I met Susan when her husband Ken came in to see me after a long time away from the dentist. He needed a lot of work! (Understatement). Many damaged teeth with old silver fillings in them and a lot of wear and tear. He was a tough guy – could have done just fine without being sedated. But he was a gagger and the sedation helped him breeze right through the appointment.

After we finished with his care, he “recommended” that we also take a look at this loving wife. She was and is a real fun and loving person – full of life, laughs and positive wit. That is ... until it was her turn for that dental “deer-in-the-headlights” experience!

She told us that over the years dentist after dentist discounted her and her concerns and seemed to not care about the level of discomfort she experienced. She said that she just could not get numb – and couldn’t stop gagging - and that they just didn’t care!

She said, *“I don’t know why, but I seemed to end up in the chairs of dentists who cared little or nothing for the fear and the pain that I was terrified to face.”* Pretty strong words – and feelings indeed!

It wasn’t a pretty story! To say her trust level was damaged would be an understatement! She simply hated being here and at times was visibly shaking!

But - when Susan saw how well her husband did with the dental treatment, and how smooth it went using sedation and that his gagging was just not an issue during treatment, she saw new possibilities and hope for herself.

I’ve heard this story a thousand times. *“I like you Doc, but I hate dentists! Nothing personal!”*

Sometimes I just wish there was a professional looking way of reaching out and embracing fearful people, give a big hug of reassurance to comfort fears – because I know I can help make a big difference in their life and help them take that important first step toward hope, trust and health.

Long story short ...

Susan very successfully had needed dental work finished which saved all of her back chewing teeth from certain loss. This has created a new future for herself in more ways than one. She was so relieved and happy. And now returning to the dentist for cleanings and ‘small stuff’ as she puts it is wonderful – because she “trusts again”!

A few days after her appointment she came back to the office and gave me one of, if not the biggest hug I think I’ve ever received from any patient (and I’ve had many). It was a true Mama Bear hug – with tears of gratitude and relief rolled down her cheeks. (These events shouldn’t take me by surprise because it happens with some regularity. And each time it reminds me of how life-changing all this really is. And I remember again why I do this!)

She came in with a new swagger, and even a bit giddy as she flashed a confident and relieved and self-assured grin from ear to ear. Even today, every time she comes in I get a warm fuzzy hug from this truly amazing woman, which she also shares with my team.

Here is what she had to say in her own words about this entire experience ...

*“Prior to visiting Dr. Ostler, as you can tell I became a phobic of all dentists. It was never a good experience! If I had a toothache I would just live with it because I had convinced myself that was better than going to the dentist. It was hard to get numb and I seemed to feel EVERYTHING! Plus, I was a bad gagger.*

*“Dr. Ostler impressed me because of his compassion and listening. He seemed confident in what he said he could do to help me with what I knew in my heart I needed to do but couldn’t*

*bring myself to do. He and his team were very reassuring and he cared about how I was feeling. I needed that.*

*“His evaluation was thorough and his explanations helped me understand “why it matters!” As well as why “it was time” to do something about it! It was all very reassuring. But I was still a mess – both in my mouth and in my head. And worse, I was still terrified of the pain and gagging that I knew was coming.*

*“Dr. Ostler then explained the option of “conscious sedation.” He explained that I would not really be “under”, but I would be unaware of what was going on and that it was a very safe procedure.*

*“On the day of the procedure I only remember my husband driving me to the appointment. And that was about it. The procedure went very well. I sort of remember bits and pieces, but not much. Dr. Ostler reminded me later what he told me up front was that one of the nice side-effects of conscious sedation was you don’t remember much the next day. That’s a nice “side-effect”. It was a unique experience indeed.*

*“All I know is that when the medication wore off, my teeth were fixed. And I don’t recall any pain at ALL! I can’t even begin to tell you how this positively affected my life and what this did for my confidence and my self-esteem. The beautiful thing is that even though I still think of myself as being a dental phobic - I am no longer afraid of dentists, especially if they do it like Dr. Ostler. All I can say is that Dr. Ostler is the ONLY dentist that is allowed to treat me!”*

After we were finished with her care, she said she was going to tell everyone! And I think she has! It has helped make my work and mission to help people a bit easier. She and many others are spreading the word and helping us get this message out so they can learn the possibilities for better health.

Why does it matter? Why do I do this?

Words can’t express how fulfilling it is to help people like Susan achieve a level of wellness they have only dreamed of and which they have been so fearful to pursue. That’s why I do this work! It’s part of my extended purpose to bless the lives of others and to help more people enjoy better health – even saving their lives ultimately!

### **Dental Sedation Improves Health**

Thankfully (and to be frankly honest) I’m not the only dentist around who performs sedation dentistry and who is willing to help people whose fears are controlling them. There aren’t many dentists with this unique training and skill-set, but there are a few. There are just so many people who need more than “regular” standard-of-care dentistry that I’m always thrilled when our patients refer others and provide us with the opportunity to fulfill our vision and purpose – to help people get and stay well. I wished I could get more dentists to serve their patients at this level!

Ever since I was a Clinical Instructor at the prestigious Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies (LVI - a post-graduate accelerated continuum for the rare dentists who really want to take their education up to the ‘next level’) I have been eager to help other dentists advance and become better in their dental treatments, as well as their understanding of the many connections between mouth health and general health.

In fact, this desire also was the drive for my involvement in the “oral systemic health arena” – to incorporate “Complete Health Dentistry” in its fullest in my own practice and to help educate other dentists in my area and across the country to aspire to this level of care.

This “mouth-body connection” is one of the most important concepts and focuses to hit and impact dentistry and medicine in the last number of years. If people (including the physicians and dentists) don’t take this seriously they jeopardize their health (and that of those they care for) resulting in increased risk for heart attack and stroke, diabetes, cancer, Alzheimer’s and dementia, and several other common health problems.

Dental phobias and fears often don’t just rob people of their teeth, smiles and career and social confidence – they also rob them of their health – maybe even their life! That’s why I’ve made it one of my missions to help educate other dentists and physicians about these connections and how to better co-manage these health connections. It provides another strong reason to offer dental sedation to patients in my area so we can remove this needless barrier to better health and well-being.

[To learn more about what I’ve done in my own area, you can visit [www.MedicalDentalSummit.com](http://www.MedicalDentalSummit.com) and see the annual meetings I help organize to get physicians and dentists on the ‘same page’ and to learn more about the merits of better co-management. You can also click a link there and watch a 30 minute documentary showing what I and others have been doing to raise awareness in our community and to help educate physicians and dentists to this new standard.]

As a former Board Member, editor, and the Past President of the American Academy for Oral Systemic Health ([www.AAOSH.org](http://www.AAOSH.org)) and a former clinical instructor, I’ve been privileged to see and experience a lot through my career. I’ve had the privilege of speaking to and teaching dentists (as well as physicians) across this country – and even internationally.

Our present health care system so badly needs this extra important level of understanding. As well as dentists and physicians who “get it”!

What they need to “get” is that there is a difference between “standard-of-care” and “optimum-care”. They are not the same! We could spend a chapter - even a book – on what/why/when/how this is so.

It’s a parallel concept that the absence of symptoms is not evidence of health, or that successful and even popular “insurance-pays-for-it” treatments to deal with symptoms is the same as wellness and prevention – and even constitutes good health care! At best, it only deals with dis-ease management and symptom suppression. Just like an aspirin doesn’t “cure” a headache, nor does it prevent the next one.

The truth is that insurance seldom pays for optimum care, prevention, or wellness. Go figure! The traditional fee-for-service model doesn’t reward health, wellness, nutrition, etc. . – because it doesn’t pay for prevention or pay well for many things other than “procedures” performed.

But that’s the subject for another time and place. Without getting too far off base, my point here is that good health matters! And – that too often dental fears can profoundly get in the way. That’s why and how dental sedation can be used as an effective method to quickly get back to a place of stability and get back on track.

Now back to sedation ...

#### **What is Sedation Dentistry helpful with?**

It’s easy to talk of the ‘technical’ aspects. They include:

- Conscious sedation allows deep deep relaxation
- Amnesia – have little to NO memory of your dental visit
- Pain free – anesthesia works much better

- Anxiety free – eliminates anxiety
- No gagging – suppresses gag reflex
- Accomplishing multiple appointments worth of work in one or two appointments

It's like ... falling asleep ... at the dentist! How great is that!

But – there are also some non-technical and emotional-based aspects that make dental sedation a dream come true.

Many of my patients have tried various strategies to alleviate their fear of going to the dentist with little or no success. They have avoided the dentist for years, and have tried everything including hypnosis, meditation, therapy counseling, distraction, and simply enduring it when they had to. Never did they think they could go to an office where Fear, Pain, and Anxiety are a thing of the past – all successfully dealt with!

Before I explain how sedation works, let me tell you about some of the things we see almost every day.

***“My face wants to smile!”***

I recently saw a woman who has spent much of the last 15 years embarrassed to show her teeth to anyone! She covered her mouth when she talked, laughed or smiled. It was habitual. She didn't like the fact that whenever she was in public or having pictures taken, she was embarrassed to let anyone see her teeth. She simply didn't smile much, even when I asked her to smile she gave me a closed-mouth smile (more like a grimace). I had to encourage her to lower her hand from her mouth so I could see her teeth. She was embarrassed and very self-conscious. I could tell right away that this had deeply affected her personality and confidence.

While this by her own admission was bad enough, the fears she had about going to the dentist were worse. Her wonderful and supportive husband worked hard to convince her to come in and that everything would be okay.

Bottom line - after just one visit, she was smiling much wider and brighter, knowing that her teeth were more attractive than they have ever been before and that she didn't need to hide her smile or her personality any longer. For a few days she had to consciously think about not covering her mouth – but that habit quickly went away and was replaced by a very radiant and confident smile.

She commented, *“It's like my face wants to smile now. Like big! Never did that before! Thank you!”*

***“I look 10 years younger!”***

Debbie, another one of our very nice but fearful patients who drives from over an hour away to see us (and passes a lot of other dental offices on her way, she makes sure to tell us) came in complaining about her teeth - that she has suffered with them and her “miserable smile” for the last several years, but was just too afraid to do anything about it.

After her care was finished she referred two of her best friends. She told us that *“Since you fixed up my smile after all these years, my friends keep telling that I look 10 Years younger! Now, they want the same thing for them!”*

She said that until she heard about what we could do and how we help, she was totally unaware of her options. She asked me *“Why hasn't my dentist told me about this before?”* I just shrugged.

**Compassion & Dental Sedation is a “Team Sport”**

Several times each week I have patients tell me they are thankful for me treating them kindly and with compassion and for taking the time to listen to them ... and most of all, care. I always say thank you but wonder why that experience is so unusual for them. I suppose that in today's normal and busy rushed dental offices (and too many physician's offices as well) that is an unusual experience. But to me, it's just the cloth I'm cut from. I care about caring and I work hard to make it happen with each patient experience. Believe me when I say that this is such an important ingredient for good health-care. It gets in the way of people receiving the care they need more than anyone wants to admit! Good chair-side and bed-side manners matter!

Everybody comes in with different experiences, filters, fears, and problems. But the bottom line is respect, listening, and then working at the top of your license and skill level to provide the kind of care I would want if I were in their shoes. And that's what we do every day, day in, day out. I promise! It's who I am. It's part of my mission!

However ... I can't take ALL the credit here. I have a WONDERFUL team helping me with this mission ... because it's theirs too! That's just who they are!

My team leader, appointment coordinator, dental hygienist and my NINJA (that's what call our dental assistant – stands for... “Not just another assistant”) are all very professional and caring and as a team we can deliver this top-notch, top-shelf care to everyone!

The point here is that when patients thank me for “curing” their fears and giving them a confident more attractive smile, teeth to chew comfortably with again, and restoring their self-esteem - I can't take all the credit. My team deserves much of the accolades. Without their investment in your care none of this would be possible! I love and trust them! And so will you.

What we do is apply and perform a blended approach - the latest scientific principles accompanied by extreme caring, consideration and respect. When needed, we supplement that with sedation dentistry which allows you to come in and completely relax (even fall asleep) through your needed dental care.

### **Here's How Sedation Dentistry Works!**

After all this – if you've hung in here this far – that you may be wondering just how this all works – scientifically.

Today's simple approach to treatment using conscious sedation boils down to using a short-acting medication called Triazolam as the lead medication. Because its half-life is so short (the amount of time it takes for one-half the dose to be metabolized), it is a perfect medication for out-patient settings and procedures and which don't require complex and expensive hospital-based monitoring.

Its safety profile and margin is excellent and perfect for dental offices, which is one of its primary uses, especially when used appropriately and with approved protocols – which we do!!!! (That's what all the extra training is for.)

It's simply the safest, easiest way to help fearful people complete important dental health procedures.

Here's the best part. You will wake up with all your dental work done, and feel little to no pain. It will be the most pleasurable experience at a dental office that you could ever imagine – or that you've ever had!

I know this may sound too obvious, but the first step is to make the call. If you are in my region please feel welcome to call my office and make an appointment to come in and discuss with myself and my team your situation, concerns and desires. This all important first step will jump start you on the path toward better health, more confidence – as well as the realization that you don't have to suffer any more.

If you are reading this and are not in my region of the country, feel welcome to call my office and we can help you find a dentist in your area that has similar training and experience.

**To summarize ... You Can Personally Benefit and Help Others At The Same Time:**

Better health lowers your health care costs, prevents and avoids untold misery, improves quality of life, and keeps you strong, well and happy! And smiling!

Take better care of your own health, including your oral/dental health. Find a caring and compassionate and competent dentist who truly understands the difference between “regular” care, and “optimum” care. This is truly one of the best ways to save money in the long run - by avoiding costly health problems and keeping your smile healthy and confident.

Be an ambassador for health and comfortable dental care. Tell your friends and family about what we're doing – about this mission – about what's possible - and that they can comfortably deal with their fears and health problems and worries - and have better health as well. You probably have more friends, family and associates than you realize who are also letting fear ruin their teeth, smiles and health and who would thank you for the suggestion and awareness.

**Finally - If it's about the money...**

Before I finish, let me tackle one more thing that frequently comes up when people have dental fears – and that's about the money!

Some people claim they have dental phobia, when it's really the cost of dental care that concerns them the most, and they're wrapping it or even hiding it with the “fear” cover. We even hear this from people who have insurance. Be that as it may, both can be problematic.

The truth is that if money is the stumbling block and especially if there are true phobia issues, both issues can and must be dealt with affirmatively and with compassion and understanding. The ‘stuff’ going on in your mouth doesn't know about or care about either your fear or your money concerns. That's for us to figure out - together.

In other words, here's what you can count on: It. Always. Gets. Worse. And. More. Expensive. If. Not. Dealt. With. Period!

Couple this with the extended costs of increasing risk factors, worsening health, heart attacks and strokes, diabetes complications, and so forth – and the ‘costs’ concerns have some added context and perspective - to say nothing of on-going low self-esteem, poor self-confidence, inability to eat, sore hurting teeth and gums, and on and on and on... you get the point! But these problems aren't going away on their own.

What I know is that this subject matter is too important and consequential to not deal with honestly and in a straight-forward manner.

I promise - there are many ways to affordably work this into people's lifestyle. What's important is to make a plan, find out your options, and begin doing something about it.