

Use of Nitrous Oxide and Oxygen Conscious Sedation

The number of calls coming into the CDHO requiring clarification on the use of nitrous oxide and oxygen for conscious sedation has been on the increase of late. Dental hygienists report that dentists are expecting them to work on clients who are receiving nitrous oxide and oxygen without the appropriately trained health professional in the room to monitor the client.



In accordance with the *Regulated Health Professions Act 1991*, (RHPA) dental hygienists are not authorized to administer nitrous oxide and oxygen by inhalation, or monitor clients receiving nitrous oxide and oxygen for conscious sedation. Dental hygienists may perform dental

hygiene interventions on clients receiving nitrous oxide and oxygen if the following conditions are present:

- Nitrous oxide and oxygen has been administered and is being monitored by an appropriately trained dentist who is a member of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons (RCDSO) or an appropriately trained registered nurse or respiratory therapist under the order of an appropriately trained dentist.

- If a registered nurse or respiratory therapist is administering or monitoring the nitrous oxide and oxygen delivery, the appropriately trained dentist must be present in the office suite and immediately available for emergency.
- Clients must be monitored by the appropriate professional afore mentioned by direct and continuous clinical observation for level of conscious sedation and assessment of vital signs.
- The dental hygienist is never left alone with the client while the client is receiving nitrous oxide and oxygen.

The RCDSO has guidelines for use of sedation and anaesthesia in a dental practice that all dentists should be aware of and should adhere to. The guidelines do not allow for dental hygienists, whether appropriately trained or not, to administer/monitor nitrous oxide and oxygen for the purpose of conscious sedation. Dental hygienists must refuse to provide dental hygiene services to clients who are receiving conscious sedation without the appropriate care and supervision by an authorized health care professional.

