Sleep Dentistry Melbourne: Anxious Patients | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/specialist-care/sleep-dentistry/

Details:

Sleep dentistry, also called sedation dentistry, uses medication to help you feel relaxed and comfortable so that dental treatment can be completed without the anxiety you might otherwise feel. Many patients have little or no memory of the procedure afterwards. At Core Dental our sleep dentistry information describes a dedicated team that includes a specialist anaesthetist, a registered nurse, a dentist and a senior dental assistant who are experienced in caring for people with dental phobia. Availability differs between practices, so please call 13 13 16 to confirm.

What is sleep dentistry?

Sleep dentistry places you in a relaxed, sleep-like state for treatment, so that you are not anxious or concerned during the procedure. Depending on the approach chosen for you, you may remain technically awake and retain protective reflexes such as coughing and gagging, while having little to no memory of the procedure afterwards. Your dentist and anaesthetist explain the type of sedation or anaesthesia proposed for you, how it works, and what the risks are, before you agree to go ahead.

Who is sleep dentistry suitable for?

The sleep dentistry technique described in our information is intended for patients with a strong dental phobia who need prolonged procedures, such as the treatment of multiple teeth in different parts of the mouth. It may also be considered if you:

feel high anxiety about dental treatment

have had traumatic dental experiences in the past

need several restorations or extractions in different areas of the mouth

have difficulty achieving complete numbness with conventional local anaesthetic

have a severe or strong gag reflex

are afraid of needles in the mouth

dislike the noises or smells associated with dental care

have difficulty keeping your mouth open for extended periods, or have limited mouth opening or jaw problems

Suitability depends on your medical history and an assessment, and sleep dentistry is not suitable for everyone.

Who is on the sleep dentistry team?

Our dedicated team, as described in our sleep dentistry information, consists of a board-registered specialist anaesthetist, a registered nurse, an experienced dentist and a senior dental assistant. All have considerable experience caring for patients with dental phobia. The specialist anaesthetist is responsible for providing appropriate medications and for monitoring your vital signs throughout the

procedure, and your airway is closely protected by the anaesthetist and the rest of the team. You can check practitioner registration on the AHPRA register at ahpra.gov.au.

What are the potential advantages of sleep dentistry?

For suitable patients, sleep dentistry can offer:

time efficiency, because several different treatments can often be completed in the same session, which can reduce chair time and the number of visits

a reduced number of numbing injections

comfort, because it can reduce the stress and discomfort that come with long and complex dental procedures

constant supervision by a team that monitors you throughout

These are potential benefits only, and your experience will vary.

What are the risks and limits of sleep dentistry?

Sedation and anaesthesia carry risks, which can include nausea, drowsiness, confusion, breathing or heart rate changes, and rarely serious reactions. Your medical history, medicines and general health affect which option is suitable, and some people are not suitable at all. You may need to arrange for someone to help you after treatment, and you will be given preparation and aftercare instructions to follow. Please tell us about your health history, allergies and medicines when you book, and ask any question you have.

What other ways can we help anxious patients?

Not every anxious patient needs sleep dentistry. At Core Dental we take extra time to help nervous patients feel comfortable and safe. For extractions, options include local anaesthetic, happy gas and sedation, as described on our general tooth extraction page. Read our articles on anxiety before your next treatment and a terrible fear of going to the dentist , or on helping a frightened child .

How much does sleep dentistry cost, and how can you pay?

Fees depend on the type of sedation or anaesthesia, the treatment being carried out, the time required and the team involved, so we give you a written treatment plan and quote before treatment starts. Please confirm the current written terms, what a quoted figure includes and any health fund rebate before booking or paying, because fees can change.

We offer interest-free payment plans through Payright for amounts up to $20,000 over 3 to 30 months with fortnightly instalments. Eligibility applies: you must be 18 or over, an Australian permanent resident, and able to provide ID and a verifiable email and mobile. Approval is not guaranteed. HICAPS claiming is available on-site, and any rebate depends on your own health fund cover. See our dental payment plans page.

How should you plan your visit?

A useful first step is to explain your concern, symptoms, timing and goals when you book, including any dental fears. Bring relevant medical information and a current medicines list. Your practitioner can then assess your teeth, gums, bite and surrounding tissues, request imaging when clinically appropriate and explain which options are suitable. Ask what the recommended approach is intended to achieve,

whether there are reasonable alternatives, what preparation and aftercare involve and what risks or limitations apply. A written treatment plan helps you compare stages and payment arrangements.

Call 000 immediately for uncontrollable bleeding, difficulty breathing or swallowing, serious facial injury or other life-threatening symptoms. For severe tooth pain or swelling without these signs, contact your practice promptly.

Where can you ask about sleep dentistry at Core Dental?

Sleep dentistry options are listed on our Epping , Wyndham and Berwick practice pages. Availability depends on the practice and the session, so call 13 13 16 to confirm where and when your assessment and treatment can take place. You can also read about our sleep dentistry overview and our wider specialist care .

Who provides sleep dentistry at Core Dental?

Sleep dentistry is provided by a team led by a registered specialist anaesthetist, with an experienced dentist, a registered nurse and a senior dental assistant. Learn more about our clinicians on our dentists and registered specialists page.

Three kinds of anaesthetic, and where sleep dentistry sits

"Sleep dentistry" is a description of how a visit feels, not a technical term, and it covers more than one thing. Separating them makes the conversation with us much easier, because the options differ in who administers them, where they happen, and what you need to arrange.

The Victorian Department of Health sets out the categories: "an anaesthetic is a drug or agent that produces a complete or partial loss of feeling. There are three kinds of anaesthetic: general, regional and local."

Local anaesthetic. The Department describes it as anaesthetic "injected into the immediate area to be operated on. For example, your dentist may inject local anaesthetic into your gum before removing a tooth." You are fully awake and the area is numb. Most dental treatment uses this alone.

Conscious sedation. This is what most people mean by sleep dentistry at a dental practice. You are not unconscious. It is separately regulated: the Dental Board of Australia states that only dentists "whose registration is endorsed for conscious sedation can use this technique in their practice". That endorsement is recorded on the public register and can be checked at ahpra.gov.au — it is not something every dentist holds.

A general anaesthetic. A hospital or day-surgery pathway. Under a general anaesthetic, in the Department's words, patients "lose sensation and become unconscious", and it is administered by "a qualified anaesthetist, who is a medical doctor with specialist training in anaesthetics". That anaesthetist "controls the length of time you are asleep, and constantly monitors your pulse, breathing and blood pressure", and will "visit you before you go to theatre to assess if you are fit enough for surgery".

The practical upshot: if being unconscious is what you are picturing, that is a general anaesthetic and it involves an anaesthetist and a theatre, not a dental chair. If what you want is to be calm, unbothered and only hazily aware, that is conscious sedation, and the question to ask is whether the dentist treating you holds the endorsement for it.

We will tell you which of these is on the table for your own treatment, and arrange the referral where a general anaesthetic is the appropriate route.

Sources: Better Health Channel (Victorian Department of Health), General anaesthetics, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (page reviewed 30 September 2012); Dental Board of Australia, Conscious sedation, dentalboard.gov.au . Both accessed 4 November 2026.

Planning the day: fasting, recovery and getting home

The part of a sedation or anaesthetic appointment that most often catches people out is not the treatment. It is the logistics on either side of it, and almost all of it has to be arranged before the day rather than on it.

Before. The Department of Health notes that "usually you will be asked not to drink or eat for several hours before the operation". The exact window is set by the clinician, not by a general rule, so ask for yours and follow it — an appointment can be postponed on the day if fasting instructions have not been met. Expect to be asked about your medical history, pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or heart problems, previous surgery, allergies, and every medicine you take, including cigarettes and alcohol. Bringing a written list is faster and more accurate than recalling it in the chair.

Getting home. This is the one to settle first. After a general anaesthetic the Department's advice is: "If you are permitted to leave hospital within hours of the surgery, don't try to drive home because your coordination may be affected by the medication. Ask a relative or friend to pick you up or take a taxi." And, separately: "Don't drive a car within 24 hours after the procedure." Arrange the lift when you book.

Afterwards. The Department's general suggestions are to "take it easy for the next day or two", rest at home, and allow that "it may take several days before you feel back to normal". It also advises avoiding herbal medicines in the days or weeks following surgery and asking your doctor about them.

On risk, we will quote the Department's own framing and no more than it says: "complications from general anaesthetic are rare." Anything more specific than that belongs in a conversation about your own health with the clinician who will be looking after you — a general consumer page is not the place to put a number on your individual risk, and we will not.

Everything above is general information from a government health page. Your own instructions come from us and, where a general anaesthetic is involved, from the anaesthetist, and they take precedence wherever they differ.

Source: Better Health Channel (Victorian Department of Health), General anaesthetics, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (page reviewed 30 September 2012; accessed 4 November 2026).

Frequently asked questions

Will I be awake during sleep dentistry?

It depends on the approach used for you. Some patients remain technically awake and retain protective reflexes such as coughing and gagging, yet have little to no memory of the procedure. Your dentist and anaesthetist explain what to expect.

Who monitors me during treatment?

A specialist anaesthetist provides the medications and monitors your vital signs throughout the procedure, supported by a registered nurse, a dentist and a senior dental assistant.

Can sleep dentistry help with a strong gag reflex?

It may be considered if you have a severe gag reflex, difficulty achieving numbness, or difficulty keeping your mouth open for long periods. Suitability depends on your health and an assessment.

Can several treatments be done in one session?

For suitable patients, multiple treatments can often be completed in a single session, which may reduce the number of visits and numbing injections. Your dentist will confirm what is practical for you.

Is sleep dentistry available for children?

Our specialist paediatric dentists are listed at some practices and may perform general anaesthetic sessions at certain sites, as listed on our clinic pages. Please call 13 13 16 to ask what is available for your child.

What is the difference between sedation and a general anaesthetic?

Consciousness, and who administers it. Under a general anaesthetic you "lose sensation and become unconscious", in the Victorian Department of Health's words, and it is given by an anaesthetist in a theatre setting. Conscious sedation leaves you awake but calm, is provided at a dental practice, and is restricted by the Dental Board of Australia to dentists whose registration is endorsed for it.

Who is qualified to give a general anaesthetic?

"A qualified anaesthetist, who is a medical doctor with specialist training in anaesthetics," according to the Department of Health. The anaesthetist assesses whether you are fit for surgery beforehand, controls how long you are asleep, and continuously monitors your pulse, breathing and blood pressure.

How do I know a dentist can provide conscious sedation?

By checking the register. The Dental Board of Australia states that only dentists "whose registration is endorsed for conscious sedation can use this technique in their practice". The endorsement appears on the public register at ahpra.gov.au, alongside each practitioner's registration type and any specialty.

Will I need to fast beforehand?

Usually, yes. The Department of Health notes that "usually you will be asked not to drink or eat for several hours before the operation". The exact period is set by the clinician for your own appointment rather than by a general rule, so ask us for your instructions and follow those.

Can I drive myself home afterwards?

Not after a general anaesthetic. The Department of Health advises against driving home if you leave within hours of surgery, "because your coordination may be affected by the medication", and against driving "within 24 hours after the procedure". Arrange for someone to collect you, or a taxi, when you book. What applies after conscious sedation depends on the medication used — ask us before the day.

Related services and further reading

Sleep dentistry

Specialist care

Is sleep dentistry suitable for you?

Paediatric dentistry

Endodontics

Oral and maxillofacial surgery

Orthodontist

General tooth extraction

Wisdom tooth extraction

Dental payment plans

Core Dental at a glance

Nine Core Dental clinics across Melbourne: Southbank, South Melbourne, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham, Berwick, Bayside and Glenferrie.

Sleep dentistry options at select practices, so please confirm availability when you book.

Open six days a week, with Monday to Friday hours to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings.

We quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free payment plans.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online through coredental.com.au, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday 8.00am to 1.30pm (Bayside Saturday 8.30am to 1.30pm), Sunday closed
Clinics	Find your nearest practice

Results, recovery times and potential risks vary for each individual. This information is general in nature and is intended for people over 18. Seek advice from a qualified, AHPRA-registered practitioner before proceeding.

What is sleep dentistry at Core Dental?

Sleep dentistry, also called sedation dentistry, uses medication to help you feel relaxed so treatment can be completed without anxiety. Core Dental patients often have little to no memory of the procedure, and suitability depends on assessment.

Who is on the Core Dental sleep dentistry team?

Our sleep dentistry information describes a board-registered specialist anaesthetist, a registered nurse, an experienced dentist and a senior dental assistant, all experienced in caring for patients with dental phobia.

What does the anaesthetist do during Core Dental sleep dentistry?

The specialist anaesthetist provides the appropriate medications and monitors vital signs throughout the procedure. Airway protection is maintained closely by the anaesthetist and the rest of the Core Dental team.

Who might benefit from sleep dentistry at Core Dental?

Sleep dentistry may suit patients with strong dental phobia, traumatic past experiences, multiple treatments needed, a severe gag reflex, fear of needles or limited mouth opening. Core Dental assesses your medical history first.

Can several treatments be completed in one sleep dentistry visit?

For suitable patients, Core Dental can often complete multiple treatments in one session, which may reduce chair time, visits and numbing injections. Your dentist confirms what is practical for your situation.

Which Core Dental practices list sleep dentistry options?

Sleep dentistry options are listed on the Core Dental Epping, Wyndham and Berwick practice pages. Availability depends on the practice and session, so call 13 13 16 to confirm before booking.

Does Core Dental offer payment plans for sleep dentistry?

Yes. We quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free Payright plans up to $20,000 over 3 to 30 months, subject to eligibility and approval. HICAPS claiming is available on-site at Core Dental clinics.

How do I book a sleep dentistry consultation at Core Dental?

Call Core Dental on 13 13 16 or book online through coredental.com.au. Tell the team about your dental fears and health history, and we will confirm the practice and arrange an assessment.