

POLICY STATEMENT



NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR
COLLEGE OF
DENTAL HYGIENISTS INC.

NITROUS OXIDE

PURPOSE

To clarify the dental hygiene scope of practice as it relates to nitrous oxide sedation.

BACKGROUND

Sedation or general anesthesia may be indicated to treat patient anxiety associated with dental treatment to enable dental treatment for patients who¹

- have cognitive impairment or motor dysfunction which prevents adequate dental treatment
- are below age of reason
- require traumatic or extensive procedures
- need pain control

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.²

POLICY STATEMENT

In accordance with the *Health Professions Act*, the Newfoundland College of Dental Hygienists (NLCDH) articulates the scope of practice for Registered Dental Hygienists in the province. The NLCDH does not permit administration or monitoring of nitrous oxide/oxygen conscious sedation by Registered Dental Hygienists.

POLICY EXPECTATIONS

A Registered Dental Hygienist must...

1. Only provide care to clients undergoing nitrous oxide/oxygen conscious sedation in the presence of a healthcare provider who is qualified to clinically observe for adverse reactions and monitor vitals at all times during the administration. In NL, only a licensed dentist, physician or Registered Nurse can administer nitrous oxide/oxygen sedation under the direct control of a dentist.

CLIENT / PATIENT EXPECTATIONS

The client can expect that a dental hygienist will not administer nitrous oxide. The dental hygienist may be in the room and provide care to the patient when this procedure is administered and monitored by a qualified healthcare provider.

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¹ <https://nlcdb.ca/Downloads/Use-Of-Sedation-Anesthesia.pdf>

² Clark M, Brunick A. Handbook of nitrous oxide and oxygen sedation. Mosby; 2003. p.3.