

Nurse Administered Nitrous Oxide at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital

Your child is experiencing pain with urination, has a urinary tract infection or perhaps has a fever combined with other symptoms and your doctor wants to perform a VCUG (Voiding Cystourethrogram). Of course, you want the best for your child and you don't want to wait. You want to know what is wrong so you can put the pain behind them and you want the procedure to be as easy for your child as possible. At Mary Bridge Children's Hospital in Tacoma, you will have all those needs met, because those are our needs too.

Until now, children undergoing urethral catheterization for urologic imaging through procedures like VCUGs in South King, Pierce or Kitsap Counties had to wait for their procedure. The existing sedation practices prevented facilities from getting children in as quickly as possible. The Imaging and Emergency Departments at Mary Bridge teamed up to find a better way. Using a multidisciplinary approach, a Nurse Administered Nitrous Oxide pilot program was developed to meet the needs of these children in our area. Kathy Scheffer, a member of the guiding team and head of Interventional Radiology nursing at Tacoma General / Mary Bridge said, "The project's aim is to develop and implement a nurse-administered nitrous oxide sedation program to provide greater comfort for pediatric patients as they undergo stressful procedures within the imaging department and emergency department at Mary Bridge." We provide greater comfort sooner, for our children in need of VCUG.

With the very successful pilot now complete, the project lived up to its expectations. Nurse Administered Nitrous Oxide provides a safe, efficient alternative and reduces the turnaround time for recovery from 30 minutes down to 5. The patients remain fully awake and cooperative while maintaining the amnesia affect - up to 80% of children are unable to recall a painful or traumatic procedure. The parent of a 6 year old girl commented that, "The Nitrous was very quick, and she likes the fact that she can go to school and walk on her own," A 5 year olds parent offered, "Recovery was much easier with Nitrous Oxide."

Nitrous oxide is not the answer for all patients in all situations, but it does provide another option for reducing distress during painful procedures. The overwhelmingly positive response from patients, families, and staff members has made the program a resounding success.

Registered Nurse, Ikuko Day recalls one patient, "Started singing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star, and we all started singing along with him in the room." Compare that to the previous experience that Valerie Chance, Child Life Specialist recalled, "I have heard from several parents that feel the experience was much better this year with the nitrous gas than with the previous experience with Versed." At Mary Bridge, we are always looking for ways to improve our patients experience and will continue to do so; nurse administered Nitrous Oxide is confirmation of that dedication.

Mary Bridge Children's Hospital is pleased to remain on the cutting edge of care making this option available to our patients.

To schedule an appointment please call our Central Scheduling line at 253.732.6220 or toll free 866.268.7223.