

Information for patients and carers

Nitrous Oxide

Use In Gynaecology

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping, wavy bands of blue. The top band is a light blue, the middle is a medium blue, and the bottom is a dark blue.

What is Nitrous Oxide (Entonox®)?

Entonox® is the trade name for 'Gas and Air', a mixture of half oxygen and half nitrous oxide. It is often used for pain relief, the exact way it works is not fully understood however, it is believed that Entonox® interacts with the brain and the spinal cord where it stops pain from being felt.

Why have I been offered Entonox® in Gynaecology?

There are procedures we carry out in gynaecology that some women find uncomfortable. The use of Entonox® can make these procedures more manageable and can prevent the need for a general anaesthetic. Everyone's experience of pain varies and your medical team will discuss with you the use of Entonox® if they feel it may be beneficial.

How is Entonox® given?

Entonox is self-administered; this means that you have control when using the gas. A nurse will show you how to use the equipment correctly. The Entonox is breathed in using a mouthpiece, which is held between your teeth with your lips closed. You will be asked to breathe deeply using the mouthpiece; you should breathe in through your mouth only. To allow the effect to build up you will be asked to start breathing Entonox® 1-2 minutes prior to your procedure.

What are the benefits of using Entonox®?

1. Entonox® begins to work within 2 minutes.
2. Entonox® wears off quickly within approximately 2-5 minutes.
3. Few side effects - Many patients use Entonox® without a serious incident.

What are the side effects of Entonox[®]?

- Dizziness – this usually improves once you stop breathing the gas
- Nausea – this usually passes once you stop breathing the gas
- Tingling – usually felt in lips and fingers, this usually passes once you stop breathing the gas
- Anaemia - this is very rare and associated with use over 6-8 hours

What about other medications I am taking?

Entonox[®] is safe with most medications but please let your medical team know if you are taking; Methotrexate, diazepam, lorazepam, bleomycin, amiodarone or antibiotics.

What precautions should I take after using Entonox[®]?

It is recommended that you do not drive or operate machinery for at least 12 hours after using Entonox as you may not be covered by your motor insurance company.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

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