

# SOLVING DENTAL FEAR, & ANXIETY PHOBIA



*How Sedation  
Is Changing  
the Way People  
Feel About Going  
to the Dentist*

WAYNE DIBARTOLA, DMD

# SOLVING DENTAL FEAR, & ANXIETY PHOBIA

*How Sedation Is Changing  
the Way People Feel About  
Going to the Dentist*

WAYNE DIBARTOLA, DMD



# SOLVING DENTAL FEAR, ANXIETY & PHOBIA

*How Sedation Is Changing the Way People Feel  
About Going to the Dentist*

Copyright © 2017 Wayne DiBartola

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, without written permission from the author, except for the inclusion of brief quotations within a review.

ISBN-13: 978-1548092771

ISBN-10: 1548092770

**Printed by:**



The Five Star Group, LLC

10403 Coachouse Place

Louisville, KY 40223

[www.TheFiveStarGroup.com](http://www.TheFiveStarGroup.com)

For more information on The Five Star Group, including finding out how you can publish your own book, visit [TheFiveStarGroup.com](http://TheFiveStarGroup.com) or call (800) 645-8642.

# DEDICATION

To Horace Wells, the discoverer of anesthesia, and to all the fine professionals who have worked to refine the techniques of modern anesthesia so that our dental patients with fear and anxiety can receive good dental care without the fear.



# HERE'S WHAT'S INSIDE...

1	Solving Dental Anxiety & Phobia . . . . .	7
2	Understanding Dental Fear, Anxiety & Phobia . . . . .	9
3	What Is Sedation Dentistry? . . . . .	11
4	What Types of Sedation Dentistry Are Available? . . . . .	13
5	Conditions Treated With Sedation Dentistry . . . . .	17
6	How To Choose The Right Sedation Dentist For You . .	21
7	Case Studies . . . . .	23
8	How To Find Out If You Are A Good Candidate For Sedation Dentistry . . . . .	27
9	Meet Dr. Wayne DiBartola . . . . .	29



# Chapter 1

## SOLVING DENTAL ANXIETY & PHOBIA

**M**y experience with sedation dentistry began when I was in dental school. My mother was not the best dental patient. She had some real fear about going to the dentist and had developed some pretty serious dental problems. After lots of encouragement and cajoling, I was finally able to get her to the dental school to have an exam, where we uncovered some fairly extensive dental issues. She said to my professor at the time, “I’m going to wait until my son gets out of school to do this.” But, because of the extent of her dental problems, we decided she didn’t have that much time left with her teeth.

We arranged for one of my instructors to do sedation on my mother and I got to observe how my mother, who I knew had such deep, deep fear and avoidance of the dentist, could have dentistry done with sedation. She was my very first sedation patient. Learning to help my mother made me realize I could help so many other people.

Incidentally, my mother's parents both had dentures and mom's perception was that teeth were only temporary and it was just a matter of time before she would lose her teeth. I'm proud to say that today at age 84, she has multiple implants, and probably has had every dental procedure that ever could be done on a patient, and still has the majority of her original teeth. All thanks to sedation.

The thing that I want people that would read this book to understand is that their dental anxiety and their dental concerns are not hopeless. We can help them get through most dental problem they're having, whether it's just a little cavity that needs filling and they don't want to experience a shot, to tackling the most complex dental problems. We're able to help them get through it.

Secondly, I would desire that 70% of the population who are fearful, anxious, or simply terror-stricken about going to the dentist to learn that they can do so without pain, unnecessary appointments or feeling self-conscious. Whether they come to me or go to someone else is not as important as them knowing there's an avenue out there for them to receive good quality dentistry that not only will help their dental problems, but will help their overall health and emotional status, and get them over a fear that really bothers them.

I hope this book inspires you to consider the possibility of a different type of dental experience... one without fear, anxiety, or self-consciousness.

Enjoy the book!

Wayne DiBartola, DMD

## Chapter 2

# UNDERSTANDING DENTAL FEAR, ANXIETY & PHOBIA

**I**t is estimated that between 50 and 70% of Americans put off, avoid, or simply don't receive adequate dental care due to fear of the dentist. As dentists qualified to administer sedation procedures, we are trained to recognize a patient's anxiety level and provide the most appropriate treatment for their particular issues. Dental fear can actually be divided into three categories, each of which can be treated accordingly.

### **Fear**

Fear is defined as an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is likely to cause pain. If you are afraid of the dentist or of having a particular procedure performed, it is likely due to a past, painful or unpleasant personal experience or the experience of someone else.

## **Anxiety**

Anxiety is defined as a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. Anxious people in need of dental care will put off dental visits, procrastinate making a dental appointment, or avoid having any dental care all together.

## **Phobia**

Phobia is defined as an extreme or irrational fear of or aversion to something. Phobias are a more serious condition that leaves people panic-stricken and terrified. People with dental phobia have an awareness that the fear is totally irrational but are unable to do much to change their beliefs.

These three categories of fear need to be approached differently when considering specific sedation methods. A dentist who is certified to administer all levels of sedation dentistry is uniquely qualified to offer sedation solutions for each one.

## Chapter 3

# WHAT IS SEDATION DENTISTRY?

If the very thought of going to the dentist results in an increased level of fear and anxiety, you're not alone. As indicated earlier, as high as 70% of people avoid going to the dentist because of fear and anxiety.

Sedation dentistry is a procedure involving the administration of sedative drugs to help people relax and feel more comfortable before and during their dental experience. The dental profession has always tried using some form of sedation process to help patients get through their dental procedure. Whether it was hypnosis in the early days, nitrous oxide, or pre-medication, sedation dentistry has been around for many years.

Sedation dentistry was born out of a patient's fear of pain, tastes, smells, and sounds associated with a dental office, the memory of an unpleasant experience, or simply the fear of getting an injection in the mouth.

One of the misconceptions related to sedation is that it is only for patients who are highly anxious. It's also for people that have a sensitive gag reflex, or people who are claustrophobic because the dentist is working in their face.

There is a wide variety of people who can benefit from sedation dentistry. We're able to help people that may be just embarrassed to go to the dentist because they have neglected their oral health for so long. Sedation is even beneficial in working with patients who need extensive dental work, but can't fathom the idea of sitting in a dental chair for 10 visits. Because we can sedate them, what would normally take 10 visits, we can accomplish in just a couple of appointments, saving them time and lots of unneeded stress.

Sedation dentistry allows a person to receive much needed dental care who might have otherwise been too fearful or anxious to schedule a dental appointment.

## Chapter 4

# WHAT TYPES OF SEDATION DENTISTRY ARE AVAILABLE?

**T**here are two main categories of sedation dentistry: Oral Conscious Sedation and Moderate Sedation.

Oral conscious sedation is a level of sedation in which the patient is awake and more aware during the dental treatment. There are two types of oral conscious sedation: Inhalation Sedation and Conscious Sedation.

### **Inhalation Sedation**

Nitrous oxide is a safe and effective sedative agent that helps you feel more comfortable and relaxed during a dental procedure. Nitrous oxide is inhaled through a small mask that fits over your nose. You will be fully awake during treatment and will be able to hear and respond to verbal commands.

Feelings of a light-headed, calming sensation are typically reported. The effects of nitrous oxide are eliminated as soon as the mask is removed, allowing you to drive your car without any residual effects. Nitrous oxide would be for people who have a mild to moderate level of fear and who just want to be relaxed a little bit.

## **Conscious Sedation With Oral Premedication**

Conscious sedation is usually accomplished with a pill (e.g. Valium). While you'll still be awake, you'll feel very relaxed, drowsy, and less aware of what is going on in the dentist's office. Unlike nitrous oxide, you will need someone to drive you to and from the dental office because the effects of the medication can last up to 24 hours, depending on the dosage. Conscious sedation is used with patients who have a mild fear about dental procedures, have a mild gag reflex, and when procedures are fairly short in duration.

## **Moderate Sedation**

Moderate sedation is a level of sedation where the patient is more deeply sedated. There are two types of moderate to deep sedation: I.V. Sedation and General Anesthesia.

### **I.V. Sedation**

While moderate sedation can be accomplished with some forms of oral medication, it is most often obtained through I.V. application. This form of moderate sedation is where the patient is more deeply sedated than in oral sedation, but is still responsive to verbal commands. When the patient is in a state of moderate sedation, they're not going to remember

anything, they're not going to feel anything, and they're not going to know that they're having anything done. Moderate sedation with I.V. is the treatment of choice for anyone that has some deep anxiety or phobia about going to the dentist, has a sensitive gag reflex, or is going to have extensive dental work done requiring long hours in the dental chair.

## **General Anesthesia**

General anesthesia produces a deep state of sedation where the patient is unable to respond to verbal commands. Deep sedation under general anesthesia is administered by an anesthesiologist and is most often performed in a hospital or surgical facility. Because of the type of dental work being performed, oral surgeons have the appropriate licenses to administer this type of sedation. General anesthesia is reserved for patients who are unable to physically or behaviorally cooperate with the dentist or have conditions requiring reconstructive procedures. In addition, many profoundly handicapped patients require general anesthesia because they are unable to understand and cooperate.

## **Risks With Sedation Dentistry**

If the patient's health history and evaluation findings are unremarkable, the risks associated with any of the sedation methods are minimal. The two main issues we are concerned about during sedation are 1.) Maintaining and monitoring an open airway and; 2.) Monitoring cardiac function.

Depending on the patient's comfort level and the procedure being performed, the sedation dentist will help the patient determine which method would be best for them.



# Chapter 5

## CONDITIONS TREATED WITH SEDATION DENTISTRY

There are many conditions that can be treated with sedation dentistry. The one condition I feel is the most rewarding is when someone comes in and feels that they're just hopeless and embarrassed and believe they're just not going to get through the procedure. In these cases sedation allows us to take a mouth that's in pretty bad shape and turn it into a healthy mouth in just a couple short visits.

Sedation is also indicated for the person who has avoided going to the dentist for so long that they have developed a painful abscessed tooth. These people arrive at the office crying, upset, their heart rate is racing, and they're just totally afraid of what we need to do to help them. Once we are able to calm them down we tell them, "Look, let's do this the right way. We will sedate you to fix your condition, and then your

fear of dentistry will improve.” Often times after receiving their dental care under sedation, they are able to return for routine care without requiring sedation.

Sedation is not just for the person who is totally afraid. It could be for someone who wants to get their work done quickly. We have a lot of patients who come in and say they’re getting married in two months and they want to be able to smile for their pictures. Using the appropriate sedation method, we’re able to provide them good quality dentistry in a short time period.

Sedation can even be used for patients with special needs. For example people with autism or cerebral palsy may not be able to sit still or understand what is happening to them during their dental visit. In such cases, I.V. sedation can help make the patient less aware or minimize sudden movements while undergoing their dental care.

We even have patients who don’t like the vibration of a cleaning instrument. For such patients, we can sedate them very lightly and get them through the procedure very easily. Other procedures where sedation is used include: implants, root canals, and tooth extractions.

While our goal is always to convert our sedation patients to a patient who can receive dentistry with only a local anesthetic, we realize some people will never convert, and that’s fine too. We’re here to help people get good quality dental care in the safest, quickest, and most comfortable way possible.

Sedation dentistry represents a major advancement for anyone who has fear, anxiety or phobia regarding dental

treatment. Sedation also is an appropriate solution for those with health conditions or special needs who cannot sit still or understand the need for a dental treatment.



## Chapter 6

# HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT SEDATION DENTIST FOR YOU

**W**hile many dentists may advertise that they offer sedation dentistry, the fact is very few are trained and certified to offer both oral conscious and moderate (I.V.) sedation.

In the state of Pennsylvania, in addition to your dental license, you must have a restricted permit license that allows you to do moderate (I.V.) sedation. Obtaining this license requires taking an 60-hour course and performing 20 cases before you can get a certificate to do sedation. You then have to pass an office evaluation where you do a live sedation patient in front of two evaluators who check to make sure all necessary equipment and drugs are available. In addition, the doctor and staff are questioned on medical emergency procedures. Upon satisfactory completion of these requirements, you are then issued your restricted permit license.

Once licensed, you must continue to remain current on your training by maintaining 15 hours of anesthesia continuing education training every 2 years. You have to be ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life Support) certified and you must have certain staff members trained in the area of sedation.

Because not all dentists are licensed to administer all types of sedation, the first thing you want to find out is the extent of your dentist's training and qualifications to administer the type of sedation you will be receiving.

Secondly, you will want to find out how many procedures the dentist has performed using sedation. Remember, for I.V. sedation, at least 20 cases are required before a dentist is eligible to be licensed.

Finally, and I believe very importantly, your vital signs should be monitored by someone other than the dentist who's doing the work. Important vital signs we monitor include EKG, blood pressure, heart rate, blood oxygen levels and the concentration of carbon dioxide.

Other important factors include having the office staff trained in ACLS and that there are emergency protocols in place. You certainly want to make sure that the office has a crash cart in case there's any reason why they would have to intervene during sedation.

# Chapter 7

## CASE STUDIES

The most rewarding thing about being a dentist is being able to help someone achieve a goal they thought they would never be able to achieve.

With sedation dentistry, we can help people get the dental care they need without the pain or any of the other things that hold people back from seeing the dentist.

Below are a few case studies and testimonials of actual patients we were able to help with sedation.

### **A Change of Life**

This first case study is Mary Ellen. She came to me for seven years before she ever let me look in her mouth. The fact that we were able to let her know that she could come into the office and talk to us without having anything done was reassuring to her - even though it took seven years for us to be able to help her.

In Mary Ellen's case her fear of the dentist was so bad she was seeing a psychologist about her dental fear. Because of

her fear, her teeth had deteriorated. After seven years, she finally agreed to let me look in her mouth. She had dental needs that required full mouth rehabilitation, including extractions, root canals, and missing teeth.

Believe it or not, Mary Ellen was only sedated on her first visit with us. Every time after that, we just had to work at her pace. We were able to get everything done in her mouth, and she now has a perfectly healthy mouth.

Mary Ellen wrote and told us that we changed her life. She's able to go out in public now and smile and not be embarrassed and no longer has any fear of the dentist. She has even stopped seeing her psychologist.

In Mary Ellen's words...

*Prior to hearing Dr. DiBartola on the radio, I had spent a long time searching for a dentist who would be compassionate and understanding while providing me good dental care. My journey with Dr. DiBartola began with several visits and discussions, as my fear of dentists was pretty severe. Because of Dr. DiBartola's patience, I was able to take the first step that consisted of an exam and x-rays, followed by an in depth discussion of the work that needed to be done. Eventually I had all the work I needed done without any problem whatsoever. Now I have regular checkups and cleanings and smile every time I look in the mirror. I am so appreciative of Dr. DiBartola and this dental team.*

## Overall Health Improvement

I have another patient who came to me saying, “I just don’t feel good.” She stated that she had missed a lot of work due to sickness and was taking all sorts of medications to combat her illness. She also stated that she was depressed and had never been able to go to a dentist. Fortunately, her mouth was not in that bad of condition. She had some gum disease and a couple of abscessed teeth. We sedated her and took care of her dental needs. As a result, her general health improved, and she was taken off some of the medications she was taking for depression.

Theresa wrote:

*The office and staff is awesome. I am so glad I started with them. I like the fact that you get a comprehensive treatment plan. Working with the recommended treatment plan my overall health has improved in such a short time I am still in shock. I had no idea my oral health was having such a negative physical impact.*

## I Can Eat A Hoagie

We have a gentleman that every time he bit into something, a tooth would break or he’d be in pain. He was apprehensive about going to the dentist because he knew his teeth were bad and he thought he was going to have to wear dentures.

Through sedation, we were not only able to extract his teeth, but we were able to place implants the very same day. He shared with us the day he ate his first hoagie, that it was the happiest day of his life.

Gene writes:

*Received upper and lower denture implants and can now , happily and painlessly, take a bite of Danny's Parkview Pizza hoagies with ZERO, None, Nada discomfort. My goal was not cosmetic improvement but rather functionality. Dr. DiBartola did a perfect job, delivered as promised. His staff is professional, trained, efficient, and patient friendly. Could NOT have asked for more. Thanks Dr. DeBartola.*

## Chapter 8

# HOW TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR SEDATION DENTISTRY

**W**e know that going to the dentist isn't at the top of everyone's bucket list of things they can't wait to do.

We also know that if you read this book, you may have some additional questions and concerns about your own oral health, but not really sure what you should do next. That's where we come in.

For anyone who has read this book, we are offering a FREE consultation to discuss your particular condition and what sedation option may be right for you. To get started, follow these 3 simple steps:

## **Step 1: Initial Consultation**

The initial consultation would entail some information gathering about the patient, about what it is that they want to achieve and what their concerns are. At that appointment, if they are relaxed enough for us to look into their mouth and take some pictures and x-rays, we will include that in our free consultation so that they can get a jump start into receiving good quality dentistry in a comfortable environment.

## **Step 2: Game Plan**

At this stage, we would provide the patient with a review of our findings and recommended game plan, discuss options of working the game plan into their budget, and then proceed only when they're ready.

## **Step 3: Extraordinary Smile Creation**

Using the appropriate level of sedation for your condition, we will complete your dental procedure in the safest, quickest and gentlest way possible and help you achieve the extraordinary smile of your dreams.

Regardless of your level of fear, anxiety or phobia, or your reasons for putting off your dental care, you do not need to live with a self-conscious smile, bad breath or painful chewing any longer.

**To schedule your no cost, no obligation consultation, call us at (412) 275-4687 or visit our website at:**

**DentistBridgevillePA.com**

## Chapter 9

# MEET DR. WAYNE DIBARTOLA

**D**r. DiBartola is dedicated to helping patients with fears, anxieties and phobias overcome their avoidance of dental treatment and provide them with the quality dental care they deserve.

### **How My Education & Training Work For You**

*“My education and training have helped me stay up-to-date on the latest changes in dentistry. What that means to you is that I can provide you with the most accurate assessment of your condition, determine the most effective treatment options for you, and provide advanced technologies and techniques to maximize your the health of your smile.”*

- ✓ B.S. Environmental Engineering, University of Pittsburgh, 1981
- ✓ Doctor of Dental Medicine, University of Pittsburgh, 1985

## Meeting The High Standards Of His Peers

*“Membership in these organizations helps me gain insight into the practice of world-class dental care.”*

- ✓ 1985 — American Dental Association National Board of Dental Examinations
- ✓ 1987 — Official Member of the American Dental Association
- ✓ 2002 — Official Member of the Academy of Laser Dentistry
- ✓ 2002 — Official Member of the Dental Organization for Conscious Sedation
- ✓ 2008 — Official Member of American Dental Society of Anesthesiology
- ✓ 2014 — Official Member of International Congress of Oral Implantologists

## Offering Help Beyond The Operating Room

*“I believe it’s important to connect with my community and be able to give back.”*

- ✓ Member of Rotary Club

- ✓ Youth sports coach
- ✓ Member Big Brothers and Sisters

## **Awards & Honors**

*“It is a privilege to care for the people of this community.”*

- ✓ Paul Harris Fellow recognition Rotary Club
- ✓ Academic All American University of Pittsburgh
- ✓ Inductee The Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League Hall of Fame
- ✓ Big Brother of the Year

## **Devoted Family Man, & Sports Enthusiast**

*“My friends and family keep me grounded as to what’s really important in life.”*

- ✓ Spends time with his three children
- ✓ Avid gardener
- ✓ Enjoys travel and cooking
- ✓ Devoted Pitt Panther fan

