



# SDHA

# Saskatchewan Dental Hygienists' Association

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## **Nitrous Oxide and Oxygen Conscious Sedation SDHA Position Statement November 2022**

This position statement is to inform registrants of the Saskatchewan Dental Hygienists' Association (SDHA) of the legislation and standards regarding the administration of nitrous oxide and oxygen conscious sedation. Nitrous oxide sedation (N<sub>2</sub>O/O<sub>2</sub>) is commonly used for the management of anxiety and mild pain. It is a safe means of conscious sedation when properly administered.

The SDHA does not permit administration, supervision or monitoring of nitrous oxide/oxygen conscious sedation by registered dental hygienists. This decision is based on legislation, professional risk and lack of comprehensive educational instruction provided for clinical observations of levels of conscious sedation. There are numerous considerations that must be attended to, which ensure the health and safety of a client undergoing nitrous oxide/oxygen conscious sedation. Therefore, the administration of nitrous oxide must be provided by a licensed dentist of the College of Dental Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CDSS) or a regulated health professional authorized to perform this activity.

Dental Hygienists may assess the need for management of client pain, anxiety and discomfort and make an appropriate referral or recommendation to a provider authorized to administer nitrous and oxygen conscious sedation and may perform dental hygiene interventions on clients receiving nitrous oxide and oxygen if the following conditions are present:

- They obtain informed consent required before the client is sedated.
- The nitrous oxide and oxygen is administered by an appropriately trained provider as noted in the CDSS Sedation and General Anesthesia Standard.
- The client is being monitored by the appropriate professional aforementioned by direct and continuous clinical observation for level of conscious sedation and assessment of vital signs.
- The healthcare professional that is monitoring the client is present in the treatment room/operator at all times and the dental hygienist is never left alone with the client while the client is receiving nitrous oxide and oxygen.

The Dental Disciplines Act section 23 (1) e. grants the authority of administration of a substance by injection or inhalation in the provision of dental treatment to dentists only. The SDHA and CDSS do not allow for dental hygienists, whether appropriately trained or not, to administer/monitor nitrous oxide and oxygen for the purpose of conscious sedation. This means in the case where any of the above criteria is not met, dental hygienists must refuse to provide dental hygiene services to clients who are receiving nitrous oxide and oxygen conscious sedation.

The competencies noted below reflect dental hygiene competencies related to the use of N<sub>2</sub>O/O<sub>2</sub> which include assessment of vitals, and assessment for management of pain. For this reason, it is not considered a competency of dental hygienists to clinically observe for levels of conscious sedation. Therefore, dental hygienists are expected to refrain from monitoring clients receiving nitrous oxygen and oxygen conscious sedation at all times.

Dental hygienists are encouraged to obtain continuing education on the use of Nitrous Oxide and Oxygen Sedation for client education purposes, the assessment of the need for pain management and to make an appropriate referral or recommendation. Additional education obtained by a dental hygienist does not grant any authority to the administration of N2O/O2.

**SDHA Competencies: Assessment**

- 5 assesses vital signs.
  
- 49 assesses the need for management of client pain, anxiety and discomfort (e.g., local anaesthetic, anti-anxiety medication, nitrous oxide/oxygen conscious sedation, support, etc.).

**\*This position has been endorsed by the College of Dental Surgeons of Saskatchewan and reflects current knowledge and is subject to periodic review and revisions with ongoing research \***