



### **What is Entonox?**

**Entonox** is a mixture of a gas called nitrous oxide and oxygen. It is also called gas and air.

Entonox helps control pain and anxiety during some medical tests and procedures such as Colonoscopy and Flexible Sigmoidoscopy. You can breathe it in through a mouthpiece and can control how much pain relief you have. It is quick to work and the effect wears off in minutes.

Entonox is often used to treat pain during childbirth and by the ambulance service and hospitals for different procedures and conditions.

### **We support the aim to reduce the amount of Entonox used in endoscopy**

The environmental impact of anaesthetic gases including nitrous oxide is well documented. In recent years, the use of Entonox as a method of pain control has increased in many endoscopy units. However, nitrous oxide is 316 times more harmful to the environment than carbon dioxide and once released can remain in the atmosphere for 110 years. We actively need to explore alternative methods of pain relief for patients or investigate methods to reduce the environmental impact.

*Reference: [Green endoscopy: practical implementation by Leigh Donnelly](#)*

In line with this, we encourage patients to ensure escort arrangement and consider having intravenous sedation (Midazolam) and opioid analgesia (Fentanyl) instead of Entonox. During procedure, we recommend extra doses of Fentanyl or other alternatives such as Paracetamol/IV to help patients with the discomfort.

## Who can use Entonox

Before your procedure, we record your blood pressure, pulse and the amount of oxygen in your blood. We also assess you by asking some questions to make sure that Entonox is suitable for you.

Please let us know if you:

- currently have, or recently had, an ear infection
- recently had an eye or ear surgery
- recently had a head injury, which meant that you had to go to hospital
- have recently been scuba diving
- recently had a condition that caused sudden or severe breathing problems, such as a chest injury or a collapsed lung
- have emphysema (a lung condition) or long-term breathing problems, such as bronchitis or asthma
- have been told that your level of vitamin B12 is low

In these cases, Entonox should not be used.

## Side effects of Entonox

Entonox is generally very safe, but there are a few possible side effects.

- Dizziness or drowsiness
- Feeling sick or nauseated
- Feeling light-headed and give you a tingly feeling (usually in your fingers).

To reduce these side effects, breathe slowly and calmly when you use Entonox. The side effects quickly improve when you stop breathing in the gas.

## Risks of using Entonox

Entonox is not always suitable for people with some respiratory (breathing) conditions because the gas may get trapped in the body. Hence, we assess you before we decide to give you Entonox.

## Leaving hospital

As the effects of Entonox wear off quickly, you can leave hospital when you feel ready.