Additional Information

Using Entonox for pain relief during children’s dressing changes - Information for Parents and Guardians

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Developed by the nursing staff on St. Anne’s Ward
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Dressing changes can be painful procedures and nurses aim to relieve this pain effectively for your child. We routinely administer several types of painkillers to achieve pain relief.

One of these painkillers is Entonox. Entonox is a colourless, sweet-smelling gas. It is a mixture of 50% Oxygen and 50% Nitrous Oxide. It provides powerful pain relief within a short time of being inhaled.

On St. Anne’s Ward, Entonox is administered using a demand-valve system. When your child breathes in, the valve opens. The valve closes again when your child breathes out. This means that the Entonox is controlled by the child’s breathing.

After breathing in the Entonox, your child may become slightly sleepy. When your child is sleepy, he or she will not be able to hold the mouthpiece in his/her mouth and therefore will not be able to breathe in any more of the Entonox. This prevents your child from breathing in too much Entonox. It is important that nurses, parents or carers should not hold the mouthpiece to allow your child to control the amount of gas they breathe in. Once the child becomes more alert, he/she will start inhaling the Entonox again.

Entonox is only suitable for children who are physically able to hold and use the mouthpiece. Also the child must be able to understand how to use the equipment. The nursing staff will teach and assist your child with this. In St. Anne’s Ward, Entonox will be used for children aged 8 years and over.

Entonox is unsuitable for some children who may have other illnesses or conditions. Your doctor will assess the child when he/she is first admitted to decide if it is appropriate to use Entonox.

Some children experience side-effects when using Entonox. These include:

- **Nausea** – if this occurs, Entonox will be stopped to let the nausea settle.
- **Headache or light-headedness** - if this occurs, Entonox will be stopped to let these sensations settle.
- **Earache** - if this occurs, Entonox will be stopped and nurses will give your child other painkillers.
- **Can affect the body’s stores of Vitamin B₁₂** – if your child receives Entonox more frequently than every 4 days, we will monitor his/her blood count.

There have been concerns about exposure of pregnant mothers to Entonox. On St. Anne’s Ward, Entonox is administered in the Burns Bathroom which has an air filtration system in place which prevents exposure of nurses, parents and carers to Entonox. If you are pregnant and it is planned to administer Entonox to your child for dressing changes, please inform your nurse who will discuss the various options with you.

Your child will also receive other painkillers before his/her dressing change. This is to make sure his/her pain is also controlled after the procedure as the effects of Entonox can wear off quickly.