

Department of anaesthesia and pain medicine

# Entonox – Pain control for acute pain

## What is Entonox?

Entonox is a well-established pain-relieving gas mixture. It consists of two gases, 50% nitrous oxide and 50% oxygen. It is self-administered, giving you complete control over the timing of the pain relief.

## How do I use Entonox?

Before the start of your procedure, your healthcare professional (HCP) will tell you how to use the Entonox equipment correctly. You have the choice of using either a facemask or a mouthpiece.

- If you choose a facemask, hold it over your mouth and nose, keeping an airtight seal. Breathe in and out normally.
- If you choose a mouthpiece, hold it between your teeth and close your lips around the mouthpiece. Breathe in and out through your mouth only.

Concentrate on breathing normally throughout the procedure. You can practise using the Entonox before the procedure starts.

## When do I start using Entonox?

A healthcare professional will advise you when to start using it. They will also supervise you when you are using the Entonox.

Before the procedure starts, breathe through the facemask or mouth piece, for up to 2 minutes, taking at least 4 breaths.

Continue to use the Entonox as you need it throughout the procedure.

If the use of Entonox is unsatisfactory at any stage, let the nurse or doctor know, so that they can look into your pain relief and consider alternatives.

## How soon does Entonox take effect?

Entonox does not work immediately. It takes from 20 seconds to 2 minutes to reach full effect. It is important to continue using the Entonox as you need it throughout the procedure, and to breathe in and out normally.



## Are there any side effects to using Entonox?

There are some possible side effects:

- Feeling light-headed whilst using Entonox
- nausea
- tiredness
- sometimes a dry mouth
- A tingling sensation, usually in the fingers. This is due to hyperventilation (over-breathing).  
Your healthcare professional will know when you are doing this and will remind you about your breathing. They will ask you to sigh out slowly, and this will automatically lead to rhythmical breathing.

## How soon does Entonox wear off?

Entonox works only when you breathe in. Its effects wear off very quickly once you have stopped breathing it in, normally within about a minute. However, you should rest for about 30 minutes before you start to walk around again.

As a safety precaution, it is advisable not to drive or operate machinery for at least 30 minutes after using Entonox and you have been assessed by your healthcare professional. After this time, you can start driving when you feel competent to do so.

## Will I be able to use Entonox?

A healthcare professional will assess you first. Entonox is normally available if you wish to use it, but it is not suitable for everyone. It is important to let your healthcare professional know if you have any of the following listed below:

- If you have recently suffered from an acute injury/condition that caused you to experience breathing problems (chest injury/collapsed lung).
- Injuries to the face and jaw.
- Recent head injury that required you to be in hospital.
- Recent middle ear infection or ear surgery.
- Any recent recreational drugs or alcohol use.
- You have taken a drug called Methotrexate in the last 7 days.
- If you have been told you have low vitamin B12.
- If you have chronic breathing problems such as emphysema, chronic bronchitis or asthma.

You may prefer not to use Entonox at all. If so, your doctor or nurse will discuss other forms of pain relief with you, such as oral medication or injections.

If you have any further questions about Entonox, do not hesitate to ask.

## Contacts

If you have any questions you may in the first instance ask the nurses and doctors on the ward.

Further assistance may be obtained from the acute pain nurse.

Phone the hospital switchboard on **0161 446 3000** and ask to speak to the acute pain nurse.

Pain management team    **0161 918 2153**

Notes:

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

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