

MEDICAL NITROUS OXIDE

EP Grade

CONSUMER MEDICINE INFORMATION
(CMI)

MEDICAL NITROUS OXIDE
Medicinal gas for inhalation



Please read this consumer information carefully for proper, safe and effective use of your equipment and therapy.

What is in this leaflet?

This leaflet answers some of the common questions about medical nitrous oxide. It does not contain all the available information. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor, anaesthetist, surgeon or dentist.

All medicines have risks and benefits. Your doctor or dentist has weighed the risks of you using medical nitrous oxide against the benefits they expect it will have for you. If you have any concerns about using medical nitrous oxide, let your doctor or dentist know.

If any side effect becomes serious, or if you notice any side effects not listed in this leaflet, please see your doctor.

Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.

What is medical nitrous oxide and what is it used for?

Medical nitrous oxide is an anaesthesia gas used for pain relief.

It is usually given with another anaesthetic gas and medical oxygen during surgery via a tube placed down your throat by an anaesthetist or given with medical oxygen via a mask by your doctor or dentist.

Medical nitrous oxide works by causing unconsciousness (deep sleep) before and during surgery and by relieving pain for certain procedures.

Ask your doctor if you have any questions about why medical nitrous oxide has been prescribed for you. This medicine is available with a doctor's prescription only.

CYLINDERS OF MEDICAL NITROUS OXIDE ARE EXCLUSIVELY RESERVED FOR THERAPEUTIC USE

Before you use medical nitrous oxide

- When you must not use medical nitrous oxide

Do not use medical nitrous oxide if:

1. You have an allergy to medical nitrous oxide or have had allergic reaction in the past.
2. You have a condition where air is entrapped within your body and it might expand when given medical nitrous oxide (e.g. bowel obstruction, blocked middle ear, following a recent dive). Ask your doctor for full detail of these conditions.
3. You have been using it for more than 24 hours without proper monitoring of your blood.
4. Do not use medical nitrous oxide without the necessary amount of medical oxygen
5. Do not use medical nitrous oxide if the cylinder is damaged or has degraded.

- Before you start to use it

It's important to discuss using medical nitrous oxide with your doctor or physician before you start treatment.

You must tell your doctor or dentist if:

1. You are allergic to any other medicines, foods, dyes or preservatives
2. You have had reactions to medical nitrous oxide or any other general anaesthetic or pain relief medication in the past
3. You have had a general anaesthesia or surgery in the past
4. You have or have had another problems or medical conditions, including:
 - A condition known as malignant hyperthermia or a family history of it
 - Low blood pressure
 - Low vitamin B₁₂ levels
 - Problems with addictions to medicines
 - Bone marrow problems including various cells in the blood
 - Neurological diseases
 - Conditions in which air is entrapped within the body
5. You are pregnant or intend to become pregnant
6. You are breastfeeding or wish to breastfeed
7. You have had long term usage or been chronically exposed to medical nitrous oxide

Note: Care should be taken when using medical nitrous oxide as it is stored under high pressure in gas cylinders. Contact with eyes or skin may result in cold burns. There are also safe working exposure levels and important storage instructions. Please discuss these with your doctor if you have any questions.

- Taking other medicines

Tell your doctor or dentist if you are taking any other medicines, including medicines you buy without a prescription from a pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop.

Some commonly used medicines that may interfere with medical nitrous oxide include:

- Pain relievers
- Anaesthetics
- Methotrexate
- Medicines which may affect your nervous system

These medicines may be affected by medical nitrous oxide or may affect how well it works.

Your doctor may have more information on medicines to avoid while using medical nitrous oxide.

Using medical nitrous oxide

Medical nitrous oxide should only be used under the supervision of your doctor or dentist.

The amount of medical nitrous oxide given to you will be decided by your doctor or dentist, depending on the amount of pain relief or sleep required. It is usually give to you by breathing through a mask or by a tube placed down your throat during surgery.

If you are elderly or have lung problems, you may need a lower amount of medical nitrous oxide.

Follow all directions given to you by your doctor or dentist carefully.

Do not take this medicine after the expiry date or if the tamper-evident seal is torn or missing.

Do not use medical nitrous oxide if you notice any significant or unusual damage to the cylinder or its valve.

DO NOT SMOKE

DO NOT PLACE NEAR A FLAME

DO NOT USE OIL OR GREASE ON MEDICAL NITROUS OXIDE EQUIPMENT

Overdose:

As medical nitrous oxide is most likely to be given to you in hospital under the direction of your doctor, it is very unlikely that you will receive an overdose. However, if this happened, quick action can be taken to maintain your breathing and replace the nitrous oxide with more oxygen.

After you have used medical nitrous oxide

- Following general anaesthesia:

Do not drive or operate machinery for at least 24 hours after using medical nitrous oxide.

General anaesthetic may cause a slight decrease in intellectual function and alertness for 2 to 3 days in some people. Ask your doctor when it is safe to drive, operate machinery or perform activities following the use of medical nitrous oxide.

- Following analgesia:

Ask your doctor when it is safe to drive, operate machinery or perform activities following the use of medical nitrous oxide.

Side effects

Tell your doctor as soon as possible if you do not feel well while using medical nitrous oxide.

Like all medicines, medical nitrous oxide can cause side effects. You may need medical treatment if you get some of the side effects. Ask your doctor any questions you may have.

In particular, tell your doctor or dentist if you notice any of the following and they worry you:

- Nausea, vomiting
- Headache, dizziness

Tell your doctor or dentist immediately if you notice any of the following:

- Confusion, excitation, depression
- Breathing problems
- Heart problems
- Pins and needles, changes in sensations
- Bleeding, fits
- Abdominal pain, bloating
- Addiction

These are serious side effects. You may need urgent medical attention. Serious side effects are rare. Other side effects may occur as a result of your operation or other medications and anaesthetics received so check with your doctor or dentist if you have any concerns.

Other side effects not listed above may also occur in some patients. Tell your doctor or dentist if you notice anything else that is making you feel unwell.

Do not be alarmed by this list of possible side effects. You may not experience any of them.

Storage

Medical nitrous oxide should be stored by your doctor or hospital in cylinders kept at ambient temperature under specific instructions.

Medical nitrous oxide is a schedule 4 medicine and must be therefore stored in a dedicated area that should be **secured and locked at all times**.

Empty and full cylinders should be stored separately.

Cylinders must be maintained vertically, valve closed.

Cylinders must be protected from impacts and shocks (i.e. bumping into each other or falling). They must be kept away from heat or ignition sources and from temperatures of 55°C and above, from flammable material and stress of weather. Avoid excessive storage.

Disposal

All AIR LIQUIDE New Zealand cylinders are the property of AIR LIQUIDE New Zealand as detailed on the product label attached to the cylinder, and are to be returned to them when no longer required.

Product description

Medical nitrous oxide is a colourless, gas with a slightly sweet odour.

It is supplied in a variety of cylinder sizes that follow the colour scheme defined by the Australian Standard AS4484.

Ingredients

Medical Nitrous Oxide ≥ 98.0% v/v

Supplier

AIR LIQUIDE New Zealand Ltd
19 Maurice Road
Penrose, Auckland
Contact: (00) 622-3880

This leaflet was prepared in September 2011