Returning home after a sedation
with or without analgesic

CHUM



You have been given a sedative with or without an analgesic (opioid). This medicine is used to reduce pain, to help you stay calm, or to put you to sleep during an examination or treatment.

Information about the sedative used

Medicine, dose, method, and time received

1 _____

2 _____

Name and telephone number of the health professional:

The sedative produces side effects. The following information will help you take care of yourself for the first 12 to 24 hours.

Possible effects of sedation

Ideally, someone responsible should go home with you and stay with you for the next 24 hours. In the next few hours, your walking may be less steady. You may feel weak, dizzy, or have trouble coordinating your movements and reacting to your surroundings. Support yourself by holding your companion's arm, and slow down your pace.

To avoid falls and accidents, focus on quiet activities, such as watching television or listening to music.

If you have any questions after you return home, feel free to call your healthcare professional.

You might have trouble speaking clearly, and you could also hallucinate, although this is rare. If this happens and continues until the next day, call your healthcare professional. If you can't reach them, go to a hospital emergency room to find out why this is happening.

While you are impaired by medication, you should not do any manual work or use dangerous tools. This is to ensure your safety and that of your family and friends. In addition, do not sign any important documents during this period.

Do not drive

Someone who has just received sedation cannot drive a car. The risk of an accident is 2 to 5 times higher than in normal times. The medication has important effects: it reduces alertness, judgment, and concentration.

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It also causes drowsiness (sleepiness) and creates a certain euphoria. That's why you should not go home alone, even by bus or on foot. Some people have reported that they didn't know where they were and where they were supposed to go, even before they got home. Someone else has to look after getting you home.

Advice for your companion

If the person you're accompanying falls asleep on the way home from the hospital, you need to monitor the first 3 to 4 hours of their sleep.

After an hour or two, call the person by name or touch them to check their condition. If they open their eyes or answer you, everything is fine. If you have trouble waking them up, insist. Wake them up completely, then let them go back to sleep. Check skin colour and breathing. An adult breathes 16 to 20 times per minute. At rest, the rate can drop to 10 or 14 breaths per minute. If the person is snoring very loudly, tell them to lie on their side.



Each person responds differently to sedation. Some have very little reaction, while others become drowsy easily.

The medication will wear off on its own within 12 to 24 hours.

Avoid substances that can make you drowsy

Avoid alcohol, cannabis and some over-the-counter products, such as antihistamines. They increase drowsiness (desire to sleep) and the risk of falling.

If you take sleeping pills, it's best not to use them the first night after you return home.

If you are on pain medication, you can continue taking it as prescribed with no problem.

When should I ask for help?

It's rare that anything serious would happen at home because of a sedative.

One serious situation would be respiratory depression. As a precaution, you should know how to recognize the danger signs for respiratory depression.

Danger signs

> The person is breathing very slowly (8 breaths or less per minute).
> You're not able to wake them up.
> Their skin is bluish or grayish.

What to do

> Call **9-1-1** immediately, don't wait.
> Give they ambulance attendants this sheet to show them what medication was used.
> Stimulate the person by talking loudly, removing any covers, or putting a cold-water compress on their neck.

USEFUL RESOURCES

The capsule *Drinking, Drugs, and Driving: Crimes* produced by Éducaloi.
> educaloi.qc.ca/en/capsules/drinking-and-driving

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.

You can also find them on our web site
chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante

The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca

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