

Returning home after a sedation with or without analgesic



When you receive a sedative, it can be to reduce pain, to calm down, or to sleep during an examination or treatment. However, it can cause side effects for 12 to 24 hours. This fact sheet explains how to manage them.

Information about the sedative received

Medication	How administered	Cumulative dose	Time of last dose received
Name of health professional			

The sedative produces side effects. The following information will help you look after yourself during the first 12 to 24 hours.

Are there any precautions I should take in my activities?

You must be accompanied by a family member or friend when returning home and for the next 24 hours. During the next few hours, your walking may be less steady than usual. If this happens, hold your companion's arm.

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

While your faculties are impaired by medication, you shouldn't do any manual work or use tools, for your own safety and that of those around you. Also, don't sign any important documents during this period.

Can I drive?

Someone who has just received sedation **cannot** drive a car or any other vehicle (motorcycle, bicycle, etc.). The risk of an accident is 2 to 5 times higher than in normal times. The medication has important side effects: it diminishes alertness, judgment, and concentration.

It also causes drowsiness (sleepiness) and creates a certain euphoria. That's why you shouldn't go home alone, even by bus or on foot. Some people have reported that they no longer knew where they were and where they were supposed to go, even before getting home. Someone else needs to look after your transportation.

Are there any other side effects?

You may :

- feel weak
- feel dizzy
- have trouble coordinating your movements
- have trouble reacting to your surroundings
- have incoherent speech or hallucinations (if this continues overnight, call a health care professional or go to the emergency room)

If you have any questions about a health concern when you return home, you can call a nurse at the CHUM Patient Health Line at **514 890-8086**. This service is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. When you call, be sure to have your health insurance card on hand.

If I'm accompanying someone, what should I do?

If the person you're accompanying falls asleep on the way home from the hospital, you need to monitor them for 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, insist. Wake them up completely, then let them go back to sleep. Check their 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 fall asleep easily.

The side effects will wear off on their own within 12 to 24 hours.



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

Are there any products I should avoid?

Don't use alcohol, cannabis, or certain over-the-counter products such as antihistamines. They increase drowsiness and the risk of falling. Even if you usually take sleeping pills to sleep, it's best not to take them the first night after you return home.

When should I ask for help?

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

One such serious situation is respiratory depression. As a precaution, your companion should know how to recognize the danger signs for respiratory depression.

Danger signs

- > Your breathing is very slow (8 breaths or less per minute).
- > Your companion isn't able to wake you up.
- > Your skin is bluish or grayish.

What to do

- > Call **9-1-1** immediately, don't wait.
- > Give the ambulance attendants this sheet to show them what medication was used.
- > Your companion should stimulate you by talking very loudly, removing any covers, or putting a cold-water compress on your neck.



USEFUL RESOURCES

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



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

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