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A Parent's Guide to Hospital Dentistry



Jeff Kinner, DDS

Hospital Dentistry (Because Safety and Compassion Come First)

It is important to view the indications for hospital dentistry as objectively as possible. **The following must be considered:**

1. Your Child's Medical Condition: For medical reasons, your child may be best treated in a hospital or surgery center. For some children, a surgery center is actually safer than in-office treatment. Dr. Kinner will consult with your child's physician to give you full informed consent.

2. The extent of dental decay and treatment needed. If your child needs a lot of dental work, it may take several visits in office to complete treatment. It can be very cruel to commit your child to attending several dental treatment sessions, if your child is uncooperative. Ultimately it will be up to you, the parent, to make an informed decision.

3. The age and weight of your child. A child needing extensive dental work, who is under 2 years of age or under 25 pounds is a better candidate for treatment in a surgery center or hospital.

4. Your consent is vital. If you, the parent, are not comfortable with treatment in a surgery center it is important for you to voice your concerns or not to give consent. If your child requires dental work and a previous attempt with in-office sedation failed, hospital makes sense because it is cruel to treat a struggling child.

5. The cooperation level your child. If your child kicks and screams when we look in his mouth with a mirror, it may be wishful thinking to believe he will cooperate for dental work, even if given moderate ("conscious") sedation in office.

6. Will the additional financial costs cause you to avoid treatment altogether? If your child has extensive decay, and you cannot afford treatment in a surgery center, a secondary treatment plan may need to be formulated that will work

best for your child given your financial situation.

7. Does your child require immediate, comprehensive dental care? This may include children with severe infection; this would also include children recently diagnosed with cancer, who will soon be undergoing chemotherapy, radiation therapy or hematopoietic cell transplantation.

8. General Anesthesia has Risks. Although these risks are low, they must be considered. Rare but serious risks of general anesthesia include: irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia), dangerous increases or decreases in blood pressure, a rapid increase in body temperature, rare reactions to medications used in the anesthesia, difficulty breathing, heart attack or stroke. Death or permanent incapacity may result from these rare events.

What are the Alternatives?

The following may be used separately or in combination:

1. In office treatment with "conscious sedation".

2. In office nitrous oxide (laughing gas).

3. Local Anesthetic ("novocaine").

These alternatives carry the same risks as general anesthesia, but to varying degrees.

Note: On occasion, it is in your child's best interest to wait or provide minimally invasive treatment.

Dr. Kinner's Perspective of Hospital Dentistry

Whenever I recommend a child to be treated in a surgical center or hospital, I always have to ask myself if it is *your child's* best interest. Your child's safety and well-being has to come first.

For your child is to receive the treatment that is best, I need you to understand the risks and benefits. It is a mutual decision that is made with full informed consent.



Dr. Jeff Kinner **The Children's Dentist**

Call: (702) 838-9013

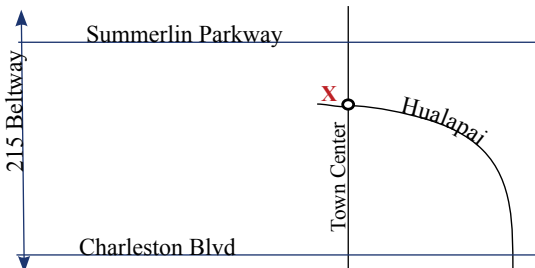
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Summerlin Medical Center



653 N Town Center Drive, Suite 104
Las Vegas, NV 89144



www.DrKinner.com