What to ask before you or your loved one has dental anesthesia or sedation?

“Good questions to your doctor deserves good answers - and good answers come from good doctors,”

– Dr. Ronald Redden, Diplomate of the American Dental Board of Anesthesiology

Am I (or is my child) a good candidate for sedation in the office? The dentist should consider pre-existing conditions like heart disease and diabetes in this answer. Be honest about all medical conditions with the dentist.

What level of sedation or anesthesia do you recommend for this procedure? There are four levels of sedation from minimal to deep. You can read about how the American Dental Association describes them here.

What level of sedation training does my dentist have? Does he/she have the appropriate permits to sedate me at the level he/she is recommending? You should check to see what permits the dentist has with your state. You can read about this permitting process in Texas here. You can also look up licensing information to see their level of training. In Texas you can search here.

Who is going to be monitoring me during the procedure and what monitors are you going to be using? The dentist should have someone else in the room to observe your vital signs, and in some cases monitor with an EKG machine. You should ask who will be present and their level of qualification.

Is this office is prepared to handle an emergency if that were to happen? Lifesaving medications to restart your heart and equipment such as defibrillators and advanced breathing equipment should be in the procedure room if you are being put to sleep. The office should also have emergency protocols in place regardless of the level of sedation you are being administered.

If I’m at an elevated risk to be sedated, can we perform this procedure in a hospital or a surgical center rather than the dental office? This is an expensive option, but one that patients have the right to request.

Have you or any members of your staff been disciplined for standard of care violations? You can check a practitioner’s discipline record with the state dental board. In Texas, you can view that here.

Are there any alternatives to this procedure that would not require sedation?

Questions compiled by Channel 2 Investigates through interviews with The Texas State Board of Dental Examiners, dental professionals and malpractice attorneys