

Sedation for GI Procedures

Three sedation options exist for your colonoscopy or EGD: Monitored Anesthesia Care (MAC), conscious sedation, and no sedation. Your physician will partner with you to decide which option is right for you based on your medical history, the scheduled procedure, and insurance considerations.

Monitored Anesthesia Care (MAC)

Who provides MAC sedation?

MAC is administered by an anesthesiologist (MD/DO) or nurse anesthetist (CRNA). You will meet your anesthesia provider on the day of your procedure to discuss your medical and anesthesia history, review the consent form, and learn what to expect from the sedation. They will be with you throughout the procedure, administering the sedation medication and monitoring your oxygen level, heart rate, and blood pressure.

Which medicines will I receive?

MAC for GI procedures primarily utilizes [propofol](#), a safe and effective drug that works and wears off quickly. You will fall asleep in less than 30 seconds after receiving the first dose, sleep soundly throughout the procedure, and wake up within minutes in the recovery room. You'll be breathing on your own; no breathing tube is required. Though uncommon, your anesthesia provider may also choose to give you additional sedation medicines tailored to your preferences and medical history. These include a benzodiazepine (midazolam) for pre-procedure anxiety, or an opioid (fentanyl) if indicated during the procedure. If you have preferences regarding these medicines, discuss this with your provider before the procedure.

MAC [may be appropriate](#) if you:

- Prefer or require a deeper level of sedation
- Have allergies or complications with opioids or benzodiazepines
- Take opioids or benzodiazepines at home
- Prioritize a faster recovery with less post-procedure grogginess

Conscious Sedation

Who provides conscious sedation?

Conscious sedation is administered by a registered nurse under the supervision of your GI physician. Your physician will meet with you on the day of your procedure to discuss your medical and anesthesia history, review the consent form, and explain the sedation and procedure. During the procedure the nurse will work as a team with your physician to administer sedation and monitor your oxygen level, heart rate, and blood pressure.

Which medicines will I receive?

During conscious sedation you will receive a benzodiazepine (midazolam, also called versed) and an opioid (fentanyl). If you have a history of nausea or vomiting with opioids, you may also receive an anti-nausea medication (ondansetron, also called zofran). Less commonly, diphenhydramine (benadryl) may also be given. These medications provide comfort and relaxation during the procedure rather than deep sleep, though some patients may forget most or all of the procedure due to the effects of the medicines. You'll be breathing on your own; no breathing tube is required.

Conscious sedation may be appropriate if you:

- Prefer a lighter level of sedation
- Are healthy with few medical problems
- Have had a successful GI procedure under conscious sedation in the past
- Prioritize cost. Conscious sedation may be cheaper depending on your insurance; speak with our billing department before your procedure

No Sedation

Discuss this option with your GI physician if you prefer no sedation during your procedure. They will guide you on whether this is an appropriate option based on your medical history, the procedure you need, and your motivations for skipping the sedation.

No sedation may be appropriate if you:

- Prefer to return to normal activities the day of your procedure, such as driving yourself home or going back to work
- Are calm and comfortable in medical settings and have no history of anxiety
- Prefer to avoid some aspect of sedation, such as an IV placement or sedation medicine. Note: some physicians will still require that you have an IV. Discuss this with your care team if this is a significant concern for you.