

Acute Sedation: Using medicine to calm

Child and Youth Information sheet – for patients and carers

Using medicine to keep calm?

Medicines can slow you down and make you sleepy. People who are very upset or angry sometimes need to take medicine to help keep them or others safe.

When do we use it?

Your team will try their best to help you/your child and other people stay safe. People who are upset, angry or afraid sometimes do things that hurt themselves or others. Our team will try to help in lots of ways; things like giving you extra time, space, quiet, favourite things or people. But sometimes this isn't enough to keep people safe. When it's possible your team will talk to you or your family or carers about using medicine.

People getting medicine may need to stay very still. Staff might need to hold you for a short time so it's safe to give the medicine. Please read the 'Physical Restraint' information sheet.

Planning can make a difference

We want to help you feel supported and cared for in the mental health service. We will talk with you about ways to help you/your child feel safe and in control, and what makes you/your child upset. We want to know what works for you/your child. Staff will try as many ways as they can to keep people safe and/or stop situations becoming dangerous.

Talk with your team about the use of medicine and when it might be helpful.

Medicine cannot be used to punish someone, or because the team is tired or its time to change over staff.

Who can give the medicine (acute sedation)?

Like other medicine, a doctor needs to decide that the medicine is safe to give. The medicine can only be given by a doctor or nurse.

Is there a risk?

All medicines need to be used properly to be safe. All medicines have benefits and risks. Not using the medicine may also have risks.

The medicines for making you calm and sleepy are called sedatives. Doctors need to carefully choose the right one for you. It will depend on your/your child's age, body shape, size and health.

Remember to ask your doctor about:

- What medicine could be helpful for you/your child
- If there can be problems using the medicine
- What to look out for (side effects)
- Anything that might need urgent attention.

Staying safe with medicines

All Queensland Health staff need to follow clear guidelines for using medicines, especially sedatives. The guidelines tell us about important clinical checks and observations of the child/young person. We need to write these checks in your/your child's clinical record.

How do we help keep you/your child safe?

We want to help you/your child feel as safe as possible. A member of the team will talk with you/your child as soon as possible if sedation is used or needs to be used. We want to check out any worries, and help you/them to cope with feelings.

The team will keep checking on you/your child's health.

Who else can you talk to?

The *Independent Patient Rights Adviser* can be contacted. They can talk with you/your child about any worries or concerns.

You can ask the team to contact a Community Visitor while in hospital who can meet with you and talk about your worries or concerns.



Useful Links:

Mental Health Act 2016

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/clinical-staff/mental-health/act>

Guideline: Acute behavioural disturbance management in Queensland Health Authorised Mental Health Services (children and adolescents)

https://www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/665306/qh-gdl-451.pdf

Public Guardian and Community Visitors

<http://www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au/child-advocate/child-community-visiting>