What Is Entonox?
Entonox is a gas that you may be offered to help you manage your discomfort/pain during some bowel investigations. It consists of 50% Oxygen and 50% Nitrous Oxide. Nitrous Oxide is sometimes used for anaesthetics but in this combination it works as a short acting painkiller. Entonox is sometimes called ‘gas and air’ and is most commonly used during child birth. As Entonox is short acting it can be used as a painkiller for any treatment that requires short-term pain relief.

Are There Any Side Effects?
Entonox can make you feel drowsy and a little light-headed. Other possible side effects include dizziness, nausea and a dry mouth. All these sensations disappear rapidly after you stop using Entonox. Most patients find that if they persevere and concentrate on breathing slowly then they quickly get used to these sensations.

How Do I Use It?
As part of your admission the Nurse looking after you will complete a checklist to make sure it is appropriate for you to have Entonox.

Please tell the Nurse if you have recently had:
- Eye surgery (with gas bubble insertion).
- Head injury with impaired consciousness.
- Facial injuries.
- Heavy sedation.
- Previous laryngectomy.
- Pneumothorax (collapsed lung), lung surgery, chest drain.
- Severe Chronic Pulmonary Disease (breathing problems)
- Extensive swelling of the abdominal or bowel obstruction (blockage).
- Decompressions sickness (recent dive).
- Air embolism.
- Are pregnant or believe you may be pregnant.

You will be shown the Entonox equipment and the Nurse will explain how to use it.

You should start using Entonox 1 – 2 minutes before the treatment starts to allow time for it to work. To get the best effect you need to take slow breaths slightly deeper than normal.

What Can/Can’t You do Afterwards
After using Entonox the effects should wear off quickly. However, we advise that you should be cautious about getting up and walking around until your balance has fully returned.

You must wait a minimum of 30 minutes before attempting to drive but this will be longer if you have been given other medicines that might cause sedation or drowsiness.
Is There an Alternative
If you are not able to have Entonox then an alternative painkiller will be discussed with you by the Nurses and Doctors.

What are the Benefits/Risks Involved in the Use of Entonox

Benefits
- You will be in control.
- The pain relief effects are rapid.
- There are no long lasting side effects.

Risks
- There is minimal risk involved with the administration of Entonox.
- The main concern is that the gas might get trapped in the body – this is only a problem if you have specific medical conditions. The Nurse will carefully assess you before you have the Entonox and will not give it if there is any risk that this may happen.

Further Information
If you have any questions or concerns regarding Entonox either before or after your procedure then please discuss these with the nursing staff on the day of your appointment.

Source of Good Practice
In compiling this leaflet a number of articles have been used including.
ENTONOX Conquering Procedural Pain (www.entonox.co.uk)
British Society of Gastroenterology Endoscopy News July 2010
British Society of Gastroenterology Safety and Sedation During Endoscopic Procedures 2003 (www.bsg.org.uk)

These translations say “If you require an interpreter, or translation, please ask a member of our staff to arrange it for you.” The languages translated, in order, are: Arabic, Urdu, Bengali, Polish, Somali and simplified Chinese.