with a hypersensitive gag reflex. The concentration of nitrous oxide required to produce suppression of the gag reflex will vary from patient to patient. This may be irrespective of size and weight, therefore each subject should be individually monitored.

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Abstracts

MAKE SURE YOUR DENTAL NURSE READS THIS!

A cleaning protocol for rotary nickel-titanium endodontic instruments.
P Parashos, P Linsuwanont and HH Messer.
Australian Dental Journal 2004; **49**: 20–27.

The cleaning of endodontic files, as with all dental instruments, is a prerequisite prior to sterilization. This study investigated more than 20 methods of cleaning six different endodontic instruments, looking macroscopically and microscopically for stained debris. A range of chairside procedures, chemical processes and ultrasonic action were compared. New, unused, files were also examined as these are not usually supplied in a sterile condition.

After the various procedures, all the new, un-used files appeared clean to the naked eye but microscopically showed evidence of non-stained debris, with six files (including one brand supplied 'pre-sterilized') showing stained debris. The cleaning success of the used files varied significantly with the various protocols, but the authors conclude that it is, indeed, possible to render all files microscopically free of debris. The recommended protocol comprised: 10 vigorous strokes in a scouring sponge soaked in 0.2% chlorhexidine solution; a 30-minute pre-soak in an enzymatic cleaning solution; 15 minutes of ultrasonication in the same solution; a 20-second rinse in running tap water. In a busy private practice it would be easy for instrument cleaning to be hurried. It is suggested that this protocol should be followed routinely following full staff training.

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