

Table 2. Recommended Terminology and Definitions of Sedation States*

STATE	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Procedural sedation	“A technique of administering sedatives or dissociative agents with or without analgesics to induce a state that allows the patient to tolerate unpleasant procedures while maintaining cardiorespiratory function. Procedural sedation and analgesia is intended to result in a depressed level of consciousness but one that allows the patient to maintain airway control independently and continuously. Specifically, the drugs, doses, and techniques used are not likely to produce a loss of protective airway reflexes.”	American College of Emergency Physicians ⁸
Minimal sedation (anxiolysis)	“A drug-induced state during which patients respond normally to verbal commands. Although cognitive function and coordination might be impaired, ventilatory and cardiovascular functions are unaffected.”	Joint Commission Sedation and Anesthesia Care Standards ²
Moderate sedation (formerly conscious sedation)	“A drug-induced depression of consciousness during which patients respond purposefully to verbal commands, either alone or accompanied by light tactile stimulation. Reflex withdrawal from a painful stimulus is not considered a purposeful response. No interventions are required to maintain a patent airway, and spontaneous ventilation is adequate. Cardiovascular function is usually maintained.”	Joint Commission Sedation and Anesthesia Care Standards ²
Dissociative sedation	“A trance-like cataleptic state induced by the dissociative drug ketamine characterized by profound analgesia and amnesia, with retention of protective airway reflexes, spontaneous respirations, and cardiopulmonary stability.”	Green SM, Krauss B. “The semantics of ketamine” ¹⁶
Deep sedation	“A drug-induced depression of consciousness during which patients cannot be easily aroused but respond purposefully following repeated or painful stimulation. The ability to independently maintain ventilatory function could be impaired. Patients might require assistance in maintaining a patent airway and spontaneous ventilation might be inadequate. Cardiovascular function is usually maintained.”	Joint Commission Sedation and Anesthesia Care Standards ²
General anesthesia	“A drug-induced loss of consciousness during which patients are not arousable, even by painful stimulation. The ability to independently maintain ventilatory function is often impaired. Patients often require assistance in maintaining a patent airway, and positive pressure ventilation might be required because of depressed spontaneous ventilation or drug-induced depression of neuromuscular function. Cardiovascular function can be impaired.”	Joint Commission Sedation and Anesthesia Care Standards ²

* Table adapted from Krauss B, SM Green. Procedural sedation and analgesia in children. *Lancet* 2006;367(9512):766-80.