

Does PCA have any side effects?

The pain medication used in the PCA may cause some side effects. Inform your nurse if you have any of the following:

- Drowsiness
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Itchiness
- Hallucinations
- Constipation (hard stool or stool that is difficult to pass)
- Trouble passing urine
- Slow or difficulty breathing (nurses will check you often)

These side effects will pass and can be treated by adjusting the PCA dose or by using other medications.

Questions?

The Acute Pain Service will check with you daily during rounds. During these rounds, you will have the opportunity to:

- Tell us about your pain
- Ask questions about the PCA
- Ask questions about your pain management, side effects, etc.

(BROPCAPMD 6/16)



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Patient Controlled Analgesia



Pain Management Device



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A PROUD HERITAGE - AN EXTRAORDINARY FUTURE

What is Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA)?

PCA allows you to manage your pain with the amount of medication you require when you need it. The goal is to keep your pain well controlled.

How does the PCA work:

PCA is a pump that will deliver small amounts of pain medication (e.g. morphine or hydromorphone) into your IV when you push the control button (a green light). Once you press the button to receive a dose, you will not be able to get any more medication until a set amount of time has passed (for example, 1 dose every 5 minutes). If you are still in pain, you can then press the button again.

The PCA pump is:

- **Set** to give a certain dose of medication with each push of the button, with a limit on how much you can get in an hour
- **Locked** so the settings can only be changed by doctors and nurses
- **Checked** to see how often you are pushing the button. If needed, we can adjust the dose, type, or timing of medication.

Could I have too much?

There is a safety feature on the PCA pump called a lockout to prevent you from getting too much medication too quickly. You will be assessed regularly. Your Anesthesiologist (pain doctor) will prescribe the amount of pain medication based on:

- the type of surgery you had
- how much pain you have at rest, and with movement

How long will I have the PCA?

Usually for 1-4 days, or until you;

- can take fluids or medications by mouth
- require the PCA less often
- experience less pain

Is it okay for Family to push the button?

No. You are the one feeling the pain and can best feel how the medication is working.

How will PCA help?

- **No waiting.** You can 'self-medicate' as soon as the pain bothers you. Or you can give yourself a dose just before trying things that might make the pain worse (like coughing, turning, getting out of bed).
- **Pain can be better controlled.** We can adjust the PCA pump so you get just the right amount of pain medication. PCA sometimes works even better when we give other medications like Tylenol®, anti-inflammatories, Gabapentin &/or slow release opioids along with it.
- **Less medication used.** Patients using PCA, often use less pain medication overall.
- **Patients can be up and around sooner.** Good pain control allows you to move around sooner, and may mean they can leave hospital earlier.