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| <i>Client:</i> | <i>Date:</i> |
| <i>Clinician:</i> | |

What is a PCA and why is it important?

The Patient Controlled Analgesia pump or PCA is a special computerized infusion pump that holds pain medication and delivers it through an intravenous line (IV). The pump enables you to give yourself pain medication and to control the amount of medication you receive for pain relief. Pain control helps the natural healing process, decreases anxiety, and allows for easier movement.

How does it work?

You are the key to managing your pain with the PCA pump because only you know how you really feel. The PCA allows you to adjust your medication to provide a level of comfort that is right for you. Your doctor and nurse will work closely with you. The PCA may not always provide complete pain relief. It is important to notify your nurse if you are uncomfortable so that additional pain relief measures can be provided.

To activate the PCA, you will press and release a control button to deliver a dose of medication to relieve your pain. The pump will “beep” to show you that you have received the dose of medication. The nurse will teach you how to use the pump properly. It is important that only you control the medication, and no one should push the button except you.

Is It Possible To Get An Overdose Of Medication?

The PCA pump is programmed so that you cannot give yourself too much medication. The nurse will set the pump’s controls to deliver pain medication at the level or dose prescribed by your doctor. It is important that only the you press the button. In rare instances respiratory depression has occurred from family members pressing the button while patients are sleeping. Do not let family members press the button.

Can PCA Cause Addiction?

Pain medications are not addictive when the medication is prescribed for a short time and then stopped gradually. People who take medicine to relieve physical pain are not likely to become addicted to medicine. Research studies have shown that patients who utilize the PCA pump actually use less pain medication. As your condition improves and your pain lessens, your doctor will change your pain medications to be taken by mouth.

What Are The Potential Side Effects of PCA Medications?

Your pain medication may cause some side effects. Please tell your nurse if you experience any nausea, constipation, itching, hives, difficulty urinating, mental confusion, or excessive sleepiness. There are treatments available to decrease the side effects.

Reference: McCaffery, M., & Pasero, C. (1999). Pain: Clinical manual (2nd ed.). Mosby, Inc. Rev. 7/04, 2/05

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Contact the on-call nurse if you are experiencing any change in your current health condition.
For ALL emergencies requiring IMMEDIATE medical attention, call 911.