

Patient controlled analgesia (PCA) pump



What is a PCA pump?

A PCA pump is a small, battery-operated machine that gives pain medicine (analgesia) to your child. The pump controls a syringe that has pain medicine ordered by your child's doctor for pain control.

How does it work?

- Your child can push a button on the pump when they have pain. The pump then gives pain medicine to them.
- The medicine goes into your child's vein through an I.V. (intravenous) and into the bloodstream when they push the button.
- A PCA pump allows your child to decide when to get pain medicine. The button should only be pressed by your child unless the doctor orders otherwise.
- The pump is set so your child cannot get too much medicine or use the pump too often, even if they push the button.
- Your child's doctor can tell how much pain medicine your child needs to stay comfortable. The doctor will make changes when needed.

Why should my child use it?

- The care team will check your child's pain often by using a pain scale.
- The pain scale has a pain rating from 0 to 10 (0 is no pain; 10 is the worst possible pain). Our goal is to lessen the pain as much as possible. Having a pain goal number is a good way to see if the plan is working.
- The pump allows your child to have pain medicine when they need it.
- It allows them to feel more in control of their treatment for pain.
- Please let your child's nurse know **right away** if you think your child's pain is not being well-controlled.

How safe is it?

- The pump has:
 - A computer that is set to prevent too much medicine from being given to your child.
 - A "lockout" period that prevents your child from getting a dose of medicine too soon, even if they push the button.
- The nurse and other caregivers watch your child closely for signs of sleepiness (too much pain medicine) or pain (not enough medicine).

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Patient controlled analgesia (PCA) pump, continued

When should I call the nurse?

Please call your child's nurse **right away** if you notice side effects from the pain medicine, such as:

- Warm, flushed face
- Feeling too sleepy or groggy or is hard to wake up
- Upset stomach or vomiting (throwing up)
- Skin rash, itching or scratching
- Trouble having a bowel movement (constipation)
- Trouble breathing

Also tell your child's nurse **right away** if you think your child's pain is not being well-controlled.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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