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## What is an On-Q Pain Relief Pump?

On-Q is a brand of pump that gives your child a slow, controlled flow of local anesthetic (medicine used to numb a painful area). It provides:

- Medicines through a small catheter.
- Pain relief for 2 to 3 days while the pump is running.

There are 2 ways to use On-Q pumps:

- The surgeon may place the catheter near the incision (cut) or near the part of the body where surgery takes place. Medicine will be infused (given) through the catheter. This is not a nerve block. It will be managed by your child's surgeon. Please talk with them for questions or concerns.
- The pain doctor may place the catheter close to the nerve that controls pain where surgery takes place (such as close to the femoral nerve for knee surgery). Medicine will be infused through the catheter.

## How can On-Q help my child?

Talk with your child's doctor about how an On-Q pump can help your child's pain.

- Most often, On-Q pumps provide continuous medicine to numb or block the nerves at the site of surgery.
- They are sometimes used for areas with chronic pain when someone has not had surgery.

If your child had a nerve block for their surgery or for pain, it helps by blocking pain in part of the body for a few hours. On-Q pumps can also:

- Provide pain relief for 2 to 3 days.
- Decrease the need for narcotic pain medicines and their side effects.

Depending on where the On-Q catheter is, your child's arm, leg or other area may be numb or hard to move. Also, they will not be able to feel hot or cold. Your child's pain control should be steady while the medicine is going through the catheter.

## What types of medicines do On-Q pumps use?

On-Q pumps use local anesthetics.

- The On-Q pump gives a certain number of milliliters (mL) of medicine every hour.
- The rate that the pump gives medicine is fixed. You or your child cannot change the rate or give more medicine. The pump is secured with a zip tie for that reason. This is a safety measure that decreases the chance that your child gets too much medicine.

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

# On-Q Pain Relief Pump, continued

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## What do I need to know to care for my child?

- A member of your child’s care team will place the catheter and On-Q pump before your child goes home. Your child will get anesthesia, which is a kind of medicine. It is given to put all or parts of the body to sleep.
- On-Q pumps are portable. They can go anywhere your child goes.
- You do not have to plug in, set or program the pump.
- For the first 24 hours, the On-Q pump will seem full (like a small, water-filled balloon). Over the next 2 to 3 days, it will **slowly** deflate.
- Fluid may leak around the catheter site. This is normal and does not mean the pump is not working.

While your child’s arm, leg or other area is numb, you will need to protect the area and check it often:

- Check to make sure any dressing or splints are not too tight.
- Check fingers and toes to make sure bloodflow is good.
  - They should be warm and pink.
  - They **should not** be blue, dusky or cold.
- Check to make sure the numb area is not resting against anything that may put pressure on it. This can cause bloodflow problems.
- Do not use heating packs, cooling packs or other devices to numb the area unless your child’s doctor prescribes them. These can cause burns or frostbite.
  - If they are prescribed, follow your doctor’s instructions closely.
  - Use them only as you are taught.
- Your child will need help to walk and move around. This is to protect the area and to help keep them from falling if their legs or feet are numb.

Your child may feel “pins and needles” in the area as the medicine in the On-Q pump starts to wear off.

- When this happens, give your child pain medicine as prescribed.
- Do not wait until the numbness goes away to give pain medicine. The pain could be worse by then and harder to treat.
- Give pain medicine with something to eat so it will not cause stomach upset.

The dressing over the site is:

- To keep the catheter from falling out.
- To protect the site from germs and infection.

You may use the extra clear, sterile dressing (such as Tegaderm) provided to help keep the site secure. Talk with the doctor who placed the catheter if you are not able to keep the catheter in place.

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# On-Q Pain Relief Pump, continued

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## How do I remove my child's catheter?

If you have been taught how to remove the catheter, follow the instructions closely. If you need help or advice, call your child's doctor or a member of the pain team. They can help guide you over the phone.

Some tips include:

1. Wash your hands well with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
2. Put on gloves if you have them.
3. Clamp the On-Q pump tubing.
4. Remove the dressing over the catheter site.
5. Slowly remove the catheter. It should come out easily with a gentle tug.
  - **Do not pull hard or force the catheter out.**
  - **Let your child's doctor know if the catheter does not come out easily.**
6. Put pressure on the catheter exit site with gauze for 5 minutes.
7. Check the catheter to be sure there is a silver, blue or black tip at the end.
  - **Call your child's doctor right away if you do not see the colored tip.**
  - **Do not throw away the catheter if you do not see the colored tip.**
8. Put a bandage on the site.
9. Check the site in 15 minutes for any bleeding or swelling. **Call your child's doctor if you see any.**
10. Place the catheter, On-Q pump and tubing in a plastic bag. Put it in the trash.
11. Wash your hands well again.

**Call your child's doctor right away if you have any trouble or if you are not comfortable removing the catheter.**

## When should I call the doctor?

While the On-Q pump is in place, your child's doctor will call you every day. Please make sure to:

- Give your doctor a current, working phone number.
- Have your phone ready for the doctor to reach you.

Clamp the pump tubing, and call your child's doctor **right away** at the phone numbers listed in the last section of this teaching sheet if your child:

- Is very sleepy and hard to wake up.
- Has slurred speech.
- Seems nervous or confused.
- Has ringing in the ears or a metal taste in the mouth.

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## On-Q Pain Relief Pump, continued

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Also call your child's doctor **right away** for any of these:

- If there is a blue or purple color of the surgery area
- If the arm, hand, leg or foot where the On-Q pump and catheter were placed has a blue or purple color
- If the catheter falls out or gets pulled out by accident.
- If there is swelling, redness or pain at the catheter or surgery site
- If you have questions or concerns about how your child looks or feels
- If you have any questions or concerns about the pump

### Who should I call with questions?

For questions:

- Call your surgeon's office if a surgeon placed the catheter your child's incision site.
- Call 404-785-KIDS (5437) if a pain doctor placed the catheter at the nerve site.
  - Tell our staff if your child had the catheter placed at the Egleston hospital campus or Scottish Rite hospital campus.
  - Ask to talk with the Pain Management attending doctor on call at that specific hospital.

At your child's follow-up visit after surgery, ask the doctor to check the catheter site to make sure it is healing well.

**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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