

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.

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. and into the bloodstream.
- 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).

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.

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

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- 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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