

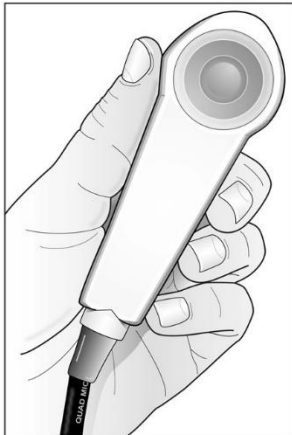
Intravenous Patient Controlled Analgesia (IV PCA)

Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA)

With PCA, you give your own dose of pain medicine. You are the best judge of how much pain you feel, and that each person may need a different amount of medicine to relieve pain.

How a PCA Works

The PCA system consists of two parts: a pump which is on the IV pole, and a control button at the end of a cable which you keep at your side.



A syringe of pain medicine is secured in the pump and runs through tubing into your IV. Your nurse sets the pump to give the amount of medicine that your doctor has ordered for you.

To receive a dose of medicine, press the lighted control button. When you press the button, the pre-programmed dose of medicine goes into your IV. For a short time (often 6-10 minutes) the pump will not give you another dose, even if you press the button again. This gives the medicine time to work while reducing risk of negative effects.

If you still have pain after this brief wait, press the button again to receive a second dose. The control button lights up when it is ready to give another dose. If you are in severe pain, you may need to press the button several times each hour to keep pain under control. You will need less doses over time.

Why is a PCA Needed

PCA allows you to safely take pain medicine based on your pain level. Benefits are that you get medicine quickly through your IV and you can control the timing. The smaller, more frequent doses used with PCA allow you to have a steady amount of pain relief. The RN will ask about your pain relief and watch you for common side effects such as drowsiness, nausea, and itching. Your nurse will check in on you often and may need to wake you up.

When to Use the PCA Pump

- When your pain is getting worse.
- A few minutes before painful activity:
 - Turning in bed
 - Walking
 - Coughing and deep breathing
 - Having a dressing changed

You may press the button to give yourself medicine to increase your comfort. The medicine will not make you pain-free, but it should allow you to rest and move around.

Please tell your doctors and nurses if the medicine is not helping to control your pain. Your doctor may change the dose, its timing, or the drug if your pain is not controlled. Once the dose and rate are set, the pump is locked to prevent any changes to the settings.

Ask your nurse about other non-drug methods to manage pain.

The PCA will be stopped when your doctors and nurses feel you are ready to take your pain pills by mouth.

Safety Alert!

Only the patient should press the button to receive the pain medicine. Family members and friends should never press the button unless there is a PCA proxy agreement. Over-dosing this medicine can cause the patient to stop breathing, which may lead to injury or death. The PCA can provide safe and effective pain relief when it is used correctly.

If you use continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) equipment at home, it is very important to use this while on a PCA as the medicine can make you sleepy and make breathing more difficult.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©9/2023 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4273.