Intravenous Patient Controlled Analgesia (IV PCA) Instruction Sheet

After surgery, everyone experiences a certain amount of pain. In order to help you to minimize any discomfort, you will have an IV PCA Pump after your operation. **It allows you to participate in your own pain management.** IV PCA works by connecting an infusion pump to your intravenous (IV) and is controlled by a button that resembles a call-bell. Each time you start to feel some discomfort you simply push the button and receive a small dose of medication. This medication will start to work in just a few minutes. Your nurse will go over the IV PCA pump with you after surgery.

Frequently asked Questions about PCA

# When will IV PCA be started?

The IV PCA pump will be started in recovery room and when you're fully awake the nurse will remind you how to use it. The pump will go to your room with you when you.

# What medication is in my IV PCA pump?

You will be receiving an opioid based medication. There are several types that may be prescribed, and your anesthesiologist will order the appropriate one for you. You will also receive pain pills to treat your pain, should you be able to take them. They will reduce the total amount of opioid pain medication you require.

# How much medication will I receive?

Your doctor will prescribe limits to the amount of medication you are to receive to relieve your pain. When you start to feel some discomfort, push and release the button. After allowing 5-10 minutes for the medication to take effect, if some discomfort still exists, the button may be pushed again. The button may be pushed as often as required in order to make you comfortable enough so that you will be able to cough, deep breath and move with minimal discomfort. Continue to give yourself more medication as needed to maintain this level of comfort once you have reached it.

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# Can I give myself too much medication?

No. The IV PCA pump is designed so that you cannot give yourself more medication than your doctor thinks is right for you. Even the push button control is safe. Rolling over on it when you are asleep won't affect the IV PCA pump. If you become sleepy or drowsy, try to wait a while until you begin to feel definite discomfort before you push the button again.

# What if I start to feel sleepy?

The pain medication you'll be receiving has that effect on many people. If you feel sleepy just decrease the number of times you push the IV PCA button until you feel more awake again.

# What if I become uncomfortable?

If your pain medication seems to stop working, even after pushing the button several times and giving the medication a few minutes to work, just call your nurse to check the IV. If you are still uncomfortable after the nurse has checked the IV, your nurse will notify your doctor and your dose will be adjusted as required.

# Do I need to stay in bed when using the IV PCA pump?

No. You are encouraged to move around with the IV PCA pump and a nurse will instruct you how to do this as you recover. The pump runs on battery or can be plugged in while you rest.

# How long will I be using the IV PCA pump?

That's a decision that you and your doctor will discuss and decide together. Most patients use the IV PCA pump for up to 48 hours following surgery. Just remember that everyone wants you to be as comfortable as possible.

# Special things you should know while using the IV PCA pump?

**DO NOT** ask or permit family and friends to push the IV PCA button for you. It is important that only YOU give yourself the medication when you feel you need it. The medication will be delivered right away and will start to work in a few minutes ... please be patient, give it time to work. When it is time for the IV PCA to be stopped you will be switched to oral pain medication. Your nurse will provide medication on request as prescribed.