

How long will I be on the PCA?

Usually a few days but this differs for everyone. Generally, once you are allowed to eat and drink, the PCA will be stopped. You will then receive oral pain medication instead.

Possible Side-Effects

You may feel slightly **drowsy** using the PCA. This is quite normal and these feelings should go away when you stop using the PCA.

You may feel **nauseated or sick** using the PCA. Please let your nurse know as they can give you anti-sickness medication to relieve this.

You may feel **itchy** on your face, chest or hands. Tell your nurse as you can have medication to relieve this. The itching will stop as soon as you stop using PCA.

A common side effect of PCA medication is constipation. Your nurse can give you a laxative to help manage this side effect.

Is the PCA safe?

Yes. The PCA gives you a set dose of pain medicine when you press the button. As an extra safety feature, the pump has a safety timer. It will not give you more medicine for seven minutes after a previous dose is delivered, even if you press the button. This is called a "lock-out" period. Once this period is over, the pump will only give you another dose of medicine if you press the button again.

Can I overdose on the PCA?

NO – The PCA pump is programmed to only give you a safe amount of pain medicine. It will not let you take more than this dose.

PCA is safe provided you are the only one to press the button. Only you know how much pain you have. If you do not have pain, you do not need to press the button.

Your nurses, doctors, relatives and visitors should NOT press the button.

Can I become addicted to the PCA medication?

No. PCA is only used for a short period of time, until you are able to eat and drink normally.

Please do not hesitate to ask your nurse if you have any further questions or scan the QR code for more information.



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SUP173C



Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA)



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Introduction

Pain is common after surgery, injury and with illness. If left untreated it may delay your recovery.

Good pain control helps you to take deep breaths, cough and to move. It will help you to recover faster, reduce the risk of complications and get you home sooner.

What is Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA)?

PCA is a method of pain management that allows you to be in control of the amount of pain relief (analgesia) you receive. The most common medications used in the PCA pump are morphine or oxycodone. The PCA pump containing the pain medication is connected to your drip, usually in your arm or hand. You will be given a handset with a button to press so that you can give yourself pain relieving medication whenever you need it. When you press the button, the pain medication will go directly into your bloodstream (via your drip).

When do I start on the PCA pump?

As soon as you are connected to the PCA pump, you will be able to use it. If you are having surgery, it will be connected in the Recovery Room as you are waking up. If you find it difficult to press the button, please let your nurse know.

It is important that you never let anyone else press the button for you.

How does the PCA work?

When you start to feel pain, you should press the button which is connected to the PCA pump. You should hear a beep confirming that the pump has acknowledged your request for pain relief.

It is very important to press the button **before** doing something that might be painful, such as taking a deep breath, coughing or moving.

For example, we recommend you press the button 3-5 minutes before taking a deep breath or before moving up the bed.

How quickly will the PCA medication work?

The pain medication generally takes 3-5 minutes to work, as it is going straight into your bloodstream.

Benefits of PCA

With PCA you can give yourself pain medicine as you feel pain starting. Please don't allow your pain to get too bad before using the PCA button. This helps to prevent pain from becoming severe, which can be much harder to treat.

Patients with good pain relief usually recover more quickly and go home earlier.

PCA is quick and safe as long as only you press the button. Only you know how much pain you feel and how much pain medicine you need.

How often can I press the button?

You can press the button as often as you need to relieve your pain. However, the pump will only allow you to receive the medication once every 7 minutes.

Therefore, the most effective way to use the PCA is to press the button before activity or as soon as you feel pain starting. Allow approximately 7-10 minutes to pass, and if you are still in pain, press the PCA button again. Continue this pattern as needed.

The level of pain experienced is different for everyone and you may need more or less pain relief than others.



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PCA
Button

What if I press the button but my pain does not go away?

Please let your nurse know if your pain is not controlled. You may simply not be pressing the button often enough. Your pain medication may be altered if needed.