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*Information for You from Your Health Care Team*

## PCA: Patient Controlled Analgesia

Pain can be one of the most difficult aspects of your **hospital stay and recovery**. There is a way to help YOU control **your** pain, called PCA.

PCA allows you to safely control your pain by pressing a button to receive your pain medicine. It will do away with waiting for the nurse to give you those painful shots. When you feel uncomfortable, press the button . . . that's PCA.



### What is PCA?

PCA stands for Patient Controlled Analgesia. Analgesia means relief from pain and patient controlled means that you have control over the pain you may be experiencing.

### How does PCA work?



Very simply, a pump or infuser contains the pain medicine prescribed by your doctor. It is connected to your existing IV line. When you the push button, you will receive enough pain medicine to give you relief in a short period of time.

### How often should I press the button?

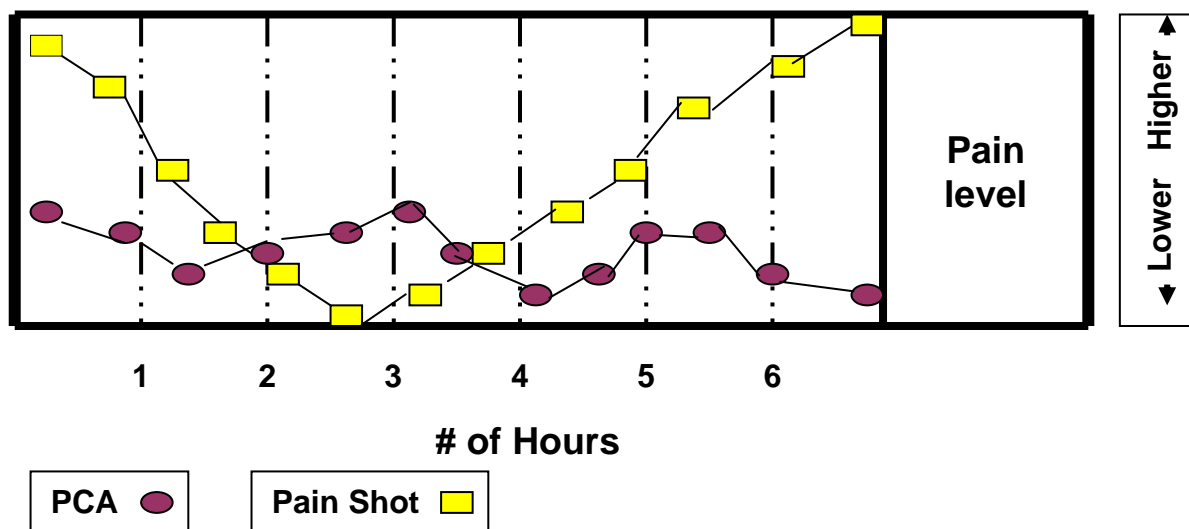
When you have pain or feel uncomfortable, press the button. You should have pain relief once the medicine has had a short time to work. If you feel sleepy, do not press the button. You want only enough pain medicine to make you feel comfortable but you want to remain alert, for a faster recovery time.

## Will I be able to give myself too much medicine?

The answer is no. Your doctor has prescribed the amount of medicine and the pump will deliver only that amount. The total number of doses that you can give yourself is determined by your doctor and the pump. You will receive enough medication to remain comfortable and yet remain alert.

## Why should I use PCA instead of pain shots?

When you require a pain shot, there can be a delay before you get the medicine. The nurse must check your doctor's orders, prepare and sign out the medicine. The nurse will then give you the shot, which contains a large amount of medicine, to control your pain over a long period of time. This may cause you to become very sleepy. You will have pain relief for a time, but your pain may return before it is time for your next injection. With PCA, you do not have to wait for your nurse. You receive much smaller doses and therefore you should not become too sleepy. When the pain returns you need not wait until the next time your medication is due to get relief.



## What if I can't get to a comfortable level?

If pressing the button does not make you comfortable and relieve your pain, call your nurse. He or she will know what to do to ensure your comfort, and will call your doctor about PCA if necessary.

## How long will I use the PCA?

That decision will be made by your doctor, but usually only until you are able to take medication by mouth instead of by IV. We hope that PCA will help make your hospital stay safe, more comfortable and that your road to recovery will be quicker and more pleasant.

**Speak up if you have any questions or concerns**