



Patient Controlled Intravenous Analgesia (PCIA)

Patient Information

Most people will experience some level of pain after surgery. It may not be possible to remove your pain completely but we will try to make you as comfortable as possible. We often use a combination of techniques to help control pain after surgery. Effective pain relief will ensure a faster recovery with fewer complications.

One treatment commonly used is the PCIA. This is a small electronic machine filled with a pain medication. It is connected to your IV tubing. You control this by pushing the button on the handset. Each time you press the button, the pain pump will give you a small dose of pain medication.

The medications used in a PCIA may cause:

- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Itchy/irritated skin
- Constipation



The nurses will watch you closely to help prevent and manage these problems.

How safe is a PCIA?

- The machine has a programmable safety timer (lockout), usually 5 minutes, ensuring you do not get too much too quickly.
- You may push the button as often as you like, but the pump will only give you one dose every five minutes, or as programmed.
- A PCIA will only be used for short periods, usually 24 – 48 hours to help control your pain immediately after surgery.
- When the PCIA is removed, you will be offered regular oral pain relief to manage your pain.

Please follow these instructions in order to get the best results;

1. Start Early

- Press the button when your pain starts to increase.

2. Press the button as often as you need

- Until your pain has reduced to a tolerable, more comfortable level.
- To control your pain level in order to be able to do necessary activities such as deep breathing, coughing and getting out of bed.

3. Stop when comfortable

- Stop using the pump once you are comfortable. Use the pump as soon as you feel your pain starting to increase.

- Remember a PCIA may not remove all the pain but will help keep you comfortable and enable you to move easier. Using the tool below you will be asked to give a score for your pain. Any score above a 3 means you should be actively using your PCIA.

Pain Score:	
0 =	No pain
10 =	Worst imaginable pain
R =	Pain at rest
M =	Pain on movement

4. No pain, no pump

- Please do not use the pump if you have no pain.

Many pain relief medications can make you drowsy and slow your breathing, if this is the case you may need to have oxygen either via a mask or nasal prongs while you are using the PCIA.

Please ask a nurse for medications to help with any side effects such as nausea or vomiting caused by using your PCIA.

Please notify your Nurse if you;

- Are experiencing nausea or have vomited
- Have pain that is not improving with continuous use of your PCIA
- Feel 'very' sleepy most of the time
- Have pain, swelling or redness at your IV site
- See blood in the tube going to the pump
- Can hear the pump alarming

You have the right to help plan your care, please discuss your options with your Doctor or nurse.



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Consumer Approved

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