

## Patient Information

# Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA)

## Acute Pain Team

Controlling pain after your operation is important. If your pain is controlled, there is reduced risk of complications as you can mobilise and take deep breaths and you will be discharged home earlier.

Pain is different for everyone - some patients will need more pain killer and some will need less.

**This leaflet gives you information about pain relief using a PCA after your operation**

***It's much easier to relieve pain before it gets severe. It's best to ask for pain relief as soon as you feel pain, and continue the treatment regularly.***

**Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA)** uses a pump that allows you to take control of your own pain relief. If you are in pain you should press your PCA button, you can do this every five minutes if required.

### **How does it work?**

You will be connected to the PCA pump (that contains strong painkillers) by a small tube in your arm or hand. The PCA button has a light to indicate when the pain treatment is available. Whenever you feel discomfort or pain, simply press and release the button. As you release the button you will receive a dose of your pain killer. Your PCA will then lock (for safety). When the light comes on again (after 5 minutes) you can press the button again, if needed.

### **How long does PCA take to work?**

It will start working within a couple minutes.

### **Can I give myself too much?**

**No**—the PCA has a lock out system of 5 minutes to prevent this.

### **What are the benefits?**

You are the one feeling the pain and a PCA allows you to control your pain. You don't have to wait to be given your pain killers and it works faster.

### **Can I take any other painkillers whilst on the PCA?**

**Yes**— your nurse may give you other painkillers if necessary. Please **do not** take any off your own painkillers whilst in hospital, without telling your nurse.

### **What are the side effects?**

Nausea & sickness

Itching

Constipation

Drowsiness or confusion

If you have any side effects, please tell your nurse as they can all be treated.

### **How long will I be on the PCA?**

You will receive PCA for up to four days, after your surgery. Once your pain has reduced, and you are able to start drinking, you will be given painkillers to swallow.

**Only you can tell if you need any pain relief—it is important that friends or relatives DO NOT press the button.**

### **What if I am still in pain?**

After your operation your nurse will talk to you about the amount of pain you are in so that we can treat you effectively.

If your pain is not controlled or you have any other problems, please discuss with your nurse.

### **Acute Pain Nurses**

Are available Monday to Friday 8am till 4pm, they will come to see you after the operation if you have a PCA, or are having problems controlling your pain.

**Further information is available from;**

**Acute Pain Specialist Nurse – [sath.pain.nurses@nhs.net](mailto:sath.pain.nurses@nhs.net)**

#### **Patient Advise and Liaison Service (PALS)**

We act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, liaising with staff, managers and where appropriate, relevant organisations to negotiate immediate or prompt solutions. We can also help you get support from other local or national agencies.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691  
Princess Royal Hospital, Tel: 01952 282888

### **Other Sources of Information**

#### **NHS 111**

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Telephone: 111 (free from a landline or mobile)

Website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## **Patient UK**

Provides leaflets on health and disease translated into 11 other languages as well as links to national support/self-help groups and a directory of UK health websites.

Website: [www.patient.info](http://www.patient.info)

**Website:** [www.sath.nhs.uk](http://www.sath.nhs.uk)

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