

Medication Side Effects

The most common side effects that may occur with patients receiving PCA narcotic pain medications include:

- Sleepiness
- Decreased Breathing
- Nausea
- Itchiness
- Difficult Urination
- Constipation

Let your nurse or physician know if you experience any of the side effects listed above. Your physician and nurses will also assess you regularly for side effects from pain medication.

Although pain medications often make you sleepy, it is important that you stay awake enough to participate in activities, which are an important part of your recovery, such as walking, deep breathing, and completing some of your own care. Therefore, you may need to balance your pain control and sleepiness.

Important Reminders

YOU are the only person who should push the PCA button. Your family or friends should not press the PCA button. To avoid getting too sleepy, or decreasing your drive to breath, you should be awake and able to push the button yourself.

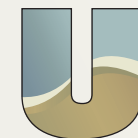
While you are using a PCA, you will have a “pulse oximeter” probe on your finger which measures your blood oxygen level and is monitored at the nurse’s station. This is a safety measure to monitor you for decreased breathing.

If you feel excessively sleepy, dizzy or weak, call the nurse for assistance before attempting to eat, get out of bed, or walk.

Your comfort is very important to us. Please don't hesitate to ask your nurse or physician for more information.

YOUR PCA PUMP

A Patient and Family Guide for
Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA)



Uintah Basin
Medical Center
UINTAH BASIN HEALTHCARE

What is a PCA Pump?

One method of giving narcotic pain medication is through a pump called a PCA (Patient Controlled Analgesia). The PCA pump allows you to control the delivery of pain medication by pressing a button connected to the PCA Pump. The pump will deliver a specific amount of the pain medicine through your IV within time limits set by your physician.

The PCA allows you to achieve better pain control by delivering small, frequent doses of pain medication. Your physician will order the dose, and how often you may receive your pain medication. The PCA Pump has safety features, which help prevent you from getting too much medicine. One of these features is a lockout time limit, usually 6 to 15 minutes. If you push the button in the lockout time, it will not deliver a medication dose. You will need to push the button again after the lockout period to receive a dose.

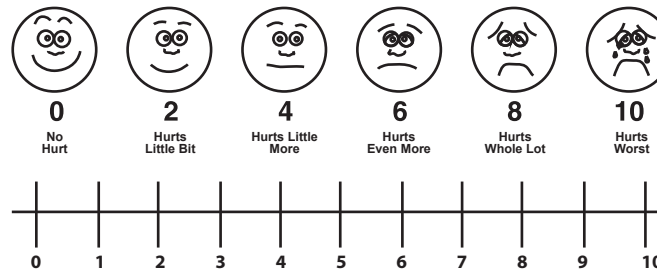
The pump will record how many times you attempt to obtain medication (how many times the button is pushed). This helps your nurse and physician adjust your medication regimen.

Assessing Your Pain

You are the only one who knows how your pain feels. To help your physician and nurse understand your pain, they will ask you to rate your pain using a 0 to 10 scale. Zero is no pain and Ten is the worst amount of pain possible.

You will be asked frequently about your pain using this scale. Always tell your nurse or physician about any pain that is new, changed, or does not improve with pain medication.

Wong-Baker FACES™ Pain Rating Scale



- 0 **No pain.**
- 1-2-3 **Mild to moderate.** Tolerable, pain control measures working.
- 4-5-6 **Moderate to severe.** May be brief with activity. If present all the time may interfere with healing.
- 7-8-9 **Severe.** May have physical changes that can delay healing.
- 10 **Worst pain possible.**

Not all pain is the same. Describing your pain in words such as “aching”, “stabbing”, “burning” or “shooting” may help your physician and nurses to administer the most appropriate pain medications.

When should you use your PCA?

Pain is common after surgery or due to an injury. The degree of pain a person experiences may vary from very little to very much. However, with the help of the PCA, we hope to keep your pain at a comfortable level.

The goal for pain management is not to completely eliminate the pain, but to keep your pain within mild to moderate levels, so you can actively participate in your recovery.

You should press the PCA button before your pain becomes severe or when it first begins. The PCA provides rapid pain control. If using the PCA pump does not decrease your pain to a tolerable level, please notify your nurse.

Remember that most patients will experience some pain after surgery particularly when using the muscles near the incision. Other methods of pain control such as proper position, decreasing environmental noises, and supporting the incision with a pillow during movement may also be helpful.