

Patient-controlled analgesia

Acute Pain Service Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet is for patients who will have patient-controlled analgesia to relieve their pain after surgery. The leaflet describes what it is, how it works, the benefits of it and any side effects that may occur.

What is patient-controlled analgesia (PCA)?

PCA is a method of pain relief that can be provided after your operation. It is a technique that allows you to receive small amounts of a pain-relieving drug, using a machine connected to a drip into a vein in your arm. You are given a handset and when you press the green button on this, a small amount of a pain-relieving drug, such as morphine, will go into your bloodstream.

It allows you to manage your own pain. Your anaesthetist will help you to decide if PCA is the best method of pain relief for you.

When will I start using the PCA?

You are able to use it as soon as you wake up from your operation. However, if you find it difficult to press the button, you should let the nurse know.

How often should I press the button?

As soon as you feel pain you should press the button on the handset. It will start to work within minutes.

The machine is set to deliver a small amount of a pain-relieving drug each time you press the button. There is a safety timer so it will not give you another dose until five minutes have passed. Therefore, you are very unlikely to give yourself too much of the drug as a result of using this machine.

To make the best use of PCA, it is a good idea to press the button about five minutes before moving, such as sitting up in bed, getting out of bed, deep breathing or if you expect to cough. We will encourage you to use it as often as you feel uncomfortable, to get the best pain relief.

Will I be given other types of pain relief?

We will give you paracetamol regularly and sometimes an anti-inflammatory drug, in addition to the PCA. This combination aims to give you effective pain relief. Your doctor or pain nurse specialist may adjust your pain relief during your stay in hospital, to achieve effective pain relief.

It is **important to note** that tablets such as paracetamol must be taken at regular intervals and not just when you have pain, for the most effective pain relief.

How long should I use PCA for?

Use it for as long as you need it. Generally after 48 hours, most patients find that their pain is controlled well on tablets and you can stop using it.

What are the benefits of PCA?

- With PCA you are in control of your own pain relief.
- You are able to move more easily and get out of bed sooner than with most other forms of pain relief.
- Patients with good pain relief usually recover more quickly and go home earlier.
- PCA is safe as long as only you press the button. Only you know how much pain you feel and how much pain medicine you need to relieve it.

What are the side effects of PCA?

It can cause side effects in some people and these can vary considerably. Some of the side effects include:

- You may feel slightly drowsy at times. This is quite normal and these feelings should go away when you stop using it.
- Very occasionally some patients feel sick. Please inform the nurse if you feel sick. We can give you anti-sickness medicine to relieve this.
- You may feel itchy on your face and chest. Tell your nurse as you can have medication to relieve this. The itching will stop as soon as you stop using PCA.

How is my pain assessed?

The nurse will ask you to describe your pain to ensure your pain relief is effective. They will ask you to describe your pain on a scale of 0 – 3:

- 0 = no pain
- 1 = mild pain
- 2 = moderate pain
- 3 = severe pain

Can I find out more?

If you have any questions, the pain specialist nurse, anaesthetist or the nurses on the ward will be happy to talk to you.

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Acute Pain Team on 01384 456111 ext. 2845, or ask the switchboard to bleep 7851 (8am to 4pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/pain-management/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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