

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

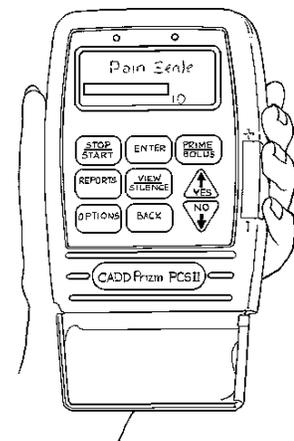
PCA or Patient Controlled Analgesia

What is PCA or Patient Controlled Analgesia?

PCA is a way for your child to control when he or she gets medicine for pain while in the hospital. When your child wants pain medicine,

- he or she pushes a button,
- the button connects to a pump,
- the pump sends the medicine through tubing into your child's IV (intravenous catheter).

- If you want to learn more about IVs, ask your nurse for the handout: **IVs (#107)**. (Check when done.)



The pump sends the medicine through tubing into your child's IV.

Why would my child need a PCA?

A child may need a PCA for pain control after surgery, or for pain caused by an injury or illness.

Everyone feels pain differently. Your child knows when he or she is in pain. The PCA pump lets your child control pain by giving the pain-relieving medicine when your child wants it. **Only your child may push the button.** Your child should also

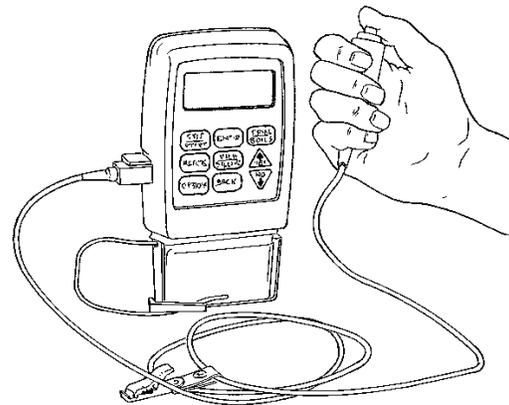
press the button before doing things that may hurt, like coughing, moving, physical therapy, or having bandages changed. You may remind your child to push the button. You may never push the button unless the doctor or nurse tells you to.

When children can control their own comfort, they are less afraid and less anxious. Using a PCA pump may also help your child feel better faster, and get out of bed sooner.

How does PCA work?

First, your child's doctor orders pain medicine to be given by a PCA pump. Then, your child's nurse puts the pump on your child's IV pole. A tube from the bag of medicine goes through the pump and into your child's IV.

The nurse will program the pump, using the computer keypad. This tells the pump how much medicine to give, and how often to give it. The nurse locks the computer so the program cannot be changed by accident. Do not try to change these settings on the pump.



When your child is in pain, he or she will push the button.

A cord with a push button is attached to the PCA pump. When your child is in pain, he or she will push the button. (The doctor may say the parent or nurse could push it.) Some children say the medicine feels warm as it goes into the vein. If your child has pain at the IV site, tell the nurse.

The pump works on batteries.

Can my child get too much pain medicine?

If only your child pushes the button on the pump, it is not likely your child will get too much medicine. The PCA pump is programmed to give the medicine in set amounts. If the button is pushed too soon after the last dose, the pump will not give

any medicine.

Some children are too young or are not able to learn how to use the pump. If your child cannot use the pump him or herself, tell the doctor or nurse. The doctor or nurse may say you may push the button when your child is in pain.

Never push the button when your child is sleeping. If the button is pushed when your child is sleeping or not in pain, the doctor may take away the pump and find another way to treat your child's pain.

Children respond to pain medicine differently. The nurse will also watch your child closely for signs of too much pain medicine. This can happen if the button is pushed when your child is sleeping, or has no signs of pain. Some pain medicine can make children sleepy. If your child seems too sleepy, or is breathing differently than usual, tell the nurse.

Are there any side effects?

The medicines that treat pain (**opioids**) given by a PCA pump are the same medicines given to children by mouth or shot (**injection**). The possible side effects to these medicines include:

- itching
- sick to the stomach
- throwing up
- trouble passing urine
- hard, dry stools (constipation)
- very sleepy
- breathing slowed down or stopped

If your child has any of these side effects, tell the nurse or doctor. Each of these can be treated. These side effects are caused by the medicine. They do not mean your child is allergic to pain medicine.

Will PCA make all the pain go away?

No, PCA may not take away all your child's pain, but it should make your child feel more comfortable. If it does not, tell your child's nurse.

The nurse will ask your child how much pain he or she is in. The nurse will also keep track of how many times your child pushes the button on the PCA.

If your child often pushes the button before the next dose can be given, it may mean your child needs to get more medicine.

How long will my child use the PCA pump?

Your child may be ready to stop using the PCA pump when your child gets to one or more of these points:

- your child is more comfortable
- your child is eating and drinking
- pain medicine given by mouth is enough to control your child's pain
- your child hardly ever pushes the PCA button.



PCA may not take away all your child's pain, but it should make your child feel more comfortable.

When these things happen, your child does not need PCA any more. The nurse will unhook the PCA tubing from your child's IV, and your child may get pain medicine by mouth.

Now that you've read this:

- Tell the nurse or doctor why your child needs PCA. (Check when done.)
- Tell the nurse or doctor who is allowed to push the button on the PCA. (Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,
 call your child's doctor or call _____

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
Facebook: facebook.com/theemilycenter
Twitter: @emilycenter
Pinterest: pinterest.com/emilycenter

Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

Monday, June 30, 2014 • DRAFT in family review
#463 • Written by Naomi Kennis, RN • Illustrated by Dennis Swain

PCA or Patient Controlled Analgesia

Name of Health Care Provider: _____

Date returned: _____ db

Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.

Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read? Yes No

easy to read? Yes No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read? Yes No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading
this handout? Yes No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any
questions about the subject? Yes No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes

No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

The Emily Center
Health Education Specialist
Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

602-933-1395

Thank you for helping us!