

## Can I take other painkillers whilst I am on the PCA?

Milder painkillers will often be given, either by mouth or suppository, at the same time as morphine. This will reduce the amount of morphine you need and lessen the unwanted effects.

## What if I do not like the PCA?

The alternatives available to you will depend upon your individual circumstances. Please let us know if you do not like the PCA and we will be happy to discuss other options with you in greater detail. Alternative analgesia information can be discussed with the anaesthetist.

## What if the PCA does not control my pain?

Occasionally, some patients still have pain despite making full use of PCA.

Remember the PCA machine is set up to be safe for everyone. But some patients will need larger doses. If you are in pain, please tell the ward staff.

## Is there any other information I need to know?

As a safety measure, please do not allow anyone else, such as family or friends to press your PCA button for you.

If you do not understand this leaflet, we can arrange for an interpreter.

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اگر مندرجات این جزوه را نمیفهمید، ما می‌توانیم مترجم در اختیارتان بگذاریم.

Jeśli masz trudności w zrozumieniu tej ulotki, możemy zorganizować tłumacza.



# Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA)

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this leaflet, please contact:

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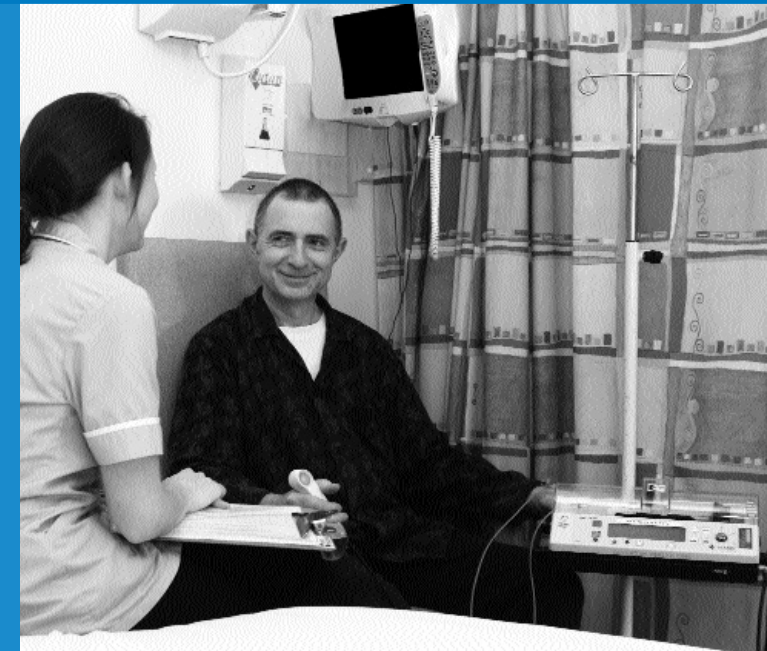
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*Pain Relief Pump*

### Why is it important to have good pain relief after an operation?

Pain is usually a warning sign. It tells us something is wrong and makes us visit the doctor. Pain after surgery is normal. But if left untreated it may delay your progress. For example, being able to cough and move in comfort is one of the keys to a successful recovery.

### How can good pain relief be achieved?

Pain after an operation can be relieved by morphine. This medicine is very effective and has been used in hospital for years. It is usually given by injection into the muscle through the skin but there are other ways to give morphine. One is called 'patient controlled analgesia' or 'PCA' for short.

### What exactly is 'PCA'?

PCA consists of a machine that is fixed to a stand by your bed. It is connected to your drip by means of a tube. Morphine is stored inside the machine. You will be given a hand held button to press when you feel pain. When pressed a small dose of morphine will go into your blood stream. It will start to work within minutes. This allows you to get a painkiller without having an injection or asking the nurse.

### Is there a danger that I might give myself too much morphine?

To stop you getting too much the machine will only allow you one dose every five minutes. This allows time for the drug to work. You will need to press the button fairly hard. The machine will beep to tell you that you have pressed hard enough. If you press before the five minutes is up, the machine will not give you a dose.

Sometimes, the machine will carry on beeping. This is to tell the nurse that it needs to be looked at, often because the morphine has run out.

### Do I have to wait until I have pain before I give myself a dose of morphine?

Patients use PCA in many ways. Some patients wait until they have pain and press the button. Some press the button five minutes before they want to move. Others will press regularly to keep the pain away. You can use as little or as

much as you want. You may have to press several times to keep comfortable. Remember that the effect of the painkiller will wear off. You will need to keep giving yourself doses to remain comfortable.

### I am worried about becoming addicted to morphine - is that possible?

Many patients are worried about using morphine as a painkiller. It is good at relieving pain after an operation. It is safe if you use morphine for pain relief, then there is virtually no chance of becoming addicted to it.

### What if I give myself too much morphine?

Some people are worried about giving themselves too much drug. When you use a lot of morphine you fall asleep. While you sleep you will not press the button. You will wake up when the morphine has worn off - overdoses hardly ever happen.

### Are there any side effects?

As with all drugs, morphine can produce unwanted effects. We cannot predict who will be affected. Morphine can make some people feel tired, lightheaded, dizzy and it can even produce vivid dreams. It can make you feel sick, itchy and constipated. If you are affected in any of these ways, tell a doctor or a nurse. Medicine can be used to help sickness and itching.