



# Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA)

Information for patients  
from the Acute Pain Team



## **WHY TREAT PAIN?**

Pain control is not only important for your comfort, but also your recovery. Good pain control allows you to start moving about and to do deep breathing exercises, which may help avoid other problems after your operation.

## **PATIENT CONTROLLED ANALGESIA (PCA)**

PCA is where a painkiller (**analgesia**) prescribed by your doctor, is given into a vein in your arm from a pump, which you control. When you are sore, you press a button to give yourself a safe amount of painkiller at timed intervals.

## **HOW LONG WILL I HAVE THE PUMP?**

On average patients use the pump for 24 - 48 hours, but this can be extended if need be. During this time the amount of pain killer you need will gradually decrease. As you begin to feel better you will press the button less often.

## **ADDITIONAL PAINKILLERS**

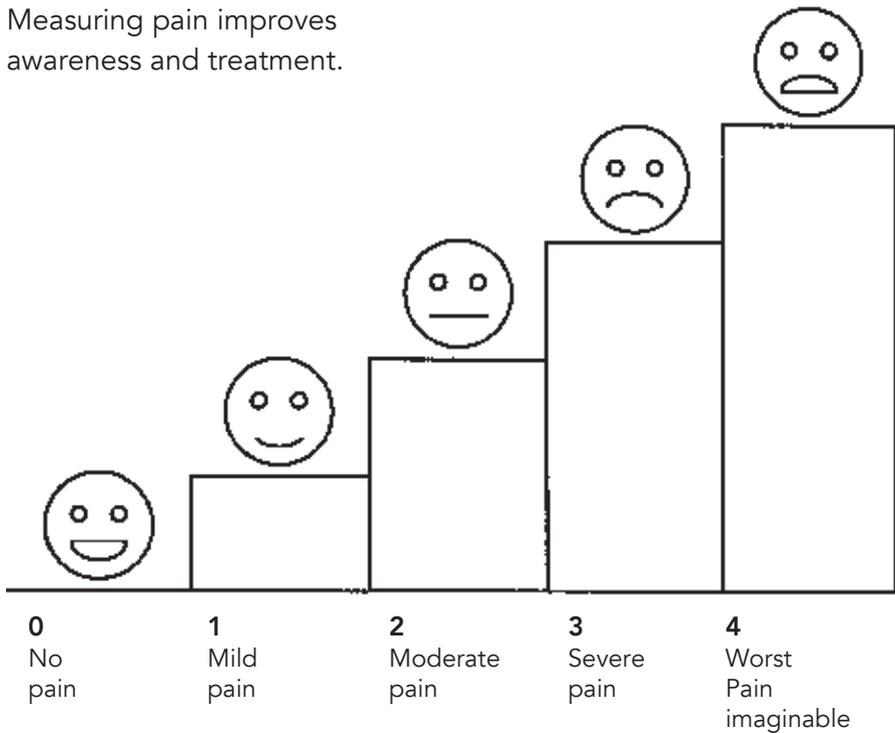
It is quite normal for your doctor to prescribe other painkillers while on your PCA.

## HOW WE ASSESS YOUR PAIN

To make sure that the painkillers are working well, the nurses will ask you on a regular basis to look at a pain scoring scale and score your pain from **number 0 meaning no pain to number 4 meaning the worst pain you can think of.**

## PAIN ASSESSMENT CHART

Measuring pain improves awareness and treatment.



## WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF THE PCA?

The main advantage is control. You control the relief of the pain and do not have to wait on a nurse preparing an injection. Another advantage is, as the painkiller goes directly into your blood stream, you should notice the effect within minutes.

## WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS/COMPLICATIONS

- ❖ Nausea (**feeling sick**) and vomiting (**being sick**)
- ❖ Itching
- ❖ Oversedation (**too sleepy**)
- ❖ Constipation
- ❖ Respiratory depression (**slow breathing**)

## HOW TO GET THE BEST EFFECT FROM THE PUMP

- ❖ Press the button when the pain is uncomfortable. Do not wait until it gets sore.
- ❖ Press the button before physiotherapy.
- ❖ Press the button before moving up the bed, getting out of bed, and so on.
- ❖ Press the button before coughing (**if you have additional pain**).
- ❖ Tell the nurse if you feel sick or have been sick.
- ❖ Tell the nurse if you feel itchy.

**Do not allow anyone else to press the button for you!**



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6 Patient Controlled Analgesia - Pain Management Service

**NHS Lanarkshire** - for local services and the latest health news visit [www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)

NHS Lanarkshire General  
Enquiry Line: 0300 30 30 243

**NHS inform** - The national health information service for Scotland.  
[www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)  
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Pub. date:	April 2022
Review date:	April 2024
Issue No:	06
Contact:	Lanarkshire Acute Pain Teams
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## QUALITY ASSESSMENT SURVEY (PCA)

1. Did anyone from the hospital explain how your pain would be relieved during your stay?  Yes  No
2. Did you understand what they told you?  Yes  No
3. Did you have to wait too long to get pain medicine?  Yes  No
4. Were you concerned about bothering the nurse to ask for pain medicine?  Yes  No
5. Did you feel in control of your pain?  Yes  No

6. Please rate the worst pain you had during your stay (tick a number from 0 - 4).

No Pain

0

1

2

3

4

Worst Pain imaginable

7. How satisfied were you with your pain relief during your stay?  
 Very dissatisfied  
 Dissatisfied  
 Neutral  
 Satisfied  
 Very satisfied

8. Please let us know how we could have improved your pain relief -

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If you wish to discuss your pain control further please include your name and telephone number and a member of our pain team will contact you directly.

**Thank you**

Personal details **(optional)**

Name .....

Tel No .....

**For the attention of the Acute Pain Sister**

**Issue site** .....

**Issue date** .....