

# PATIENT CONTROLLED ANALGESIA PEDIATRIC



Eastern  
Health

## WHAT IS PATIENT CONTROLLED ANALGESIA (PCA)?

PCA is a way to give pain medication (morphine or hydromorphone) that allows children/teens to:

- Self-treat their pain
- Decide when they need their pain medication
- Push a button connected to a locked intravenous (IV) pump that gives a pre-set amount of medication. Your child cannot get more pain medication through the pump until a minimum set amount of time has passed. If your child pushes the button before the next medication dose is due, no medication will be given

### The PCA pump is:

- **Set** to give a certain dose of medication with each push of the button but will limit how many times your child can get medication within one hour
- **Locked**, so the settings on the pump can only be changed by a nurse or doctor
- **Checked** by the staff to see how often your child is pushing the button. This helps them decide if the PCA is working to control your child's pain

### Is my child old enough for PCA?

- Children/teens must be able to understand how the PCA works
- Staff will decide if PCA is the best choice for your child and will teach your child/teen how to use PCA

### Can parents push the button for pain medication?

- **No.** Your child or teen is the one feeling the pain and they can best feel how the medication is working
- ***Your child will not push the button if they are sleeping or drowsy; but a parent who pushes it for a sleeping child could cause breathing problems for the child***

### Can patients give themselves too much?

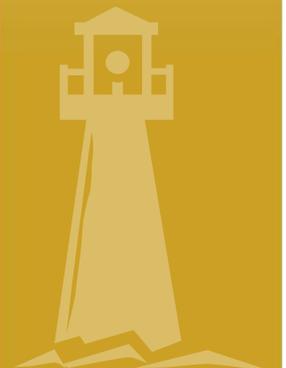
- Rarely. The anesthesiologist (pain doctor) will decide the amount of pain medication your child/teen should get based on
  - Your child/teens weight
  - The type of surgery your child/teen had
  - How much pain your child or teen has both at rest and when moving

### How long will my child or teen have PCA?

- Usually for 2-4 days
- May need to press the button less often as they get better after surgery
- Will slowly need less pain medication over time, until the PCA is not needed

### How will the PCA help my child or teen?

- No waiting. Children/teens can self-medicate as soon as pain bothers them or can give themselves a dose before trying things that may make pain worse such as getting out of bed
- Pain can be better controlled. The PCA pump can be adjusted to give your child the right amount of pain medication and works even better when taken with other medications as prescribed by your doctor
- Patients can be up and around sooner. Good pain control allows children and teens to move around sooner after surgery



## Does PCA have side effects?

- It may cause:
  - Drowsiness
  - Nausea
  - Vomiting
  - Mild itching
  - Constipation
  - Trouble urinating (going pee)
  - Slow breathing (nurses will check your child often)
- These side effects will go away and can be treated by changing the PCA dose or using other medications

