

## Acute Pain Service

# Information on patient controlled analgesia

Pain is a personal matter. The amount and type of pain relief required varies between people, even for the same type of injury or surgery.

### What is PCA?

Patient controlled analgesia, or PCA, is a method of pain control that allows you to give yourself some pain relief as and when you need it.



### How does a PCA work?

The PCA system is attached to you through an infusion into a vein in your arm. You control the system with a hand held button (other ways of activating the system are available if you do not have full use of your hands). When you feel pain, you should push the button on your PCA handset and a small amount of pain killer will be delivered directly into your bloodstream. Pain relief should be felt within a few minutes; if not you can press the button again.

### Who controls the PCA?

You are the only person who knows when you are in pain so you are the only person who should press the PCA button.

## Is PCA safe?

The PCA has alarms set to alert your nurse of any problems. It is carefully programmed to deliver only a specific amount of painkiller so you cannot overdose. The nurses and doctors will follow your progress carefully. There will be frequent checks on your blood pressure, pulse, breathing and level of sedation.

## Is the PCA painkiller addictive?

Not when used to relieve pain. Pain relief is needed after injury or surgery to ensure a quick recovery and avoid other health problems such as chest infection or deep vein thrombosis.

## Your part in controlling pain

You will be asked to rate your pain when you move. Use the pain assessment chart (by your bed) with faces, numbers, words or colours to indicate the amount of pain you have. Using numbers, pain would be scored as follows.

- 0=no pain
- 10 worse pain imaginable

Your reports will help the nurses and doctors to make necessary adjustments to your care.

It is realistic to expect some pain when coughing or moving about in bed but it should never be more than mild (bearable). Pressing the PCA button before mobilising, deep breathing or coughing will help to prevent your pain level from rising. Use your PCA to keep your pain level in the mild and bearable range (score 0 – 4) just before and during movement.

## Are there any side effects?

All drugs have some side effects. The most common side effects with a PCA are:

- nausea
- vomiting
- itching
- drowsiness

These side effects do not occur in everybody. If they occur, report them to the nurse looking after you. Medications can be given to counteract the side effects.



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

### Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Polish

Jeżeli chciałbyś uzyskać te informacje w innym języku, w dużej czcionce lub w formacie audio, poproś pracownika oddziału o kontakt z biurem Informacji Pacjenta (Patient Information) pod numerem telefonu: 01223 216032 lub pod adresem [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Portuguese

Se precisar desta informação noutra língua, em impressão de letras grandes ou formato áudio, por favor peça ao departamento que contacte a secção de Informação aos Doentes (Patient Information) pelo telefone 01223 216032 ou através do e-mail [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Arabic

إذا كنت تود الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، بالأحرف الكبيرة أو بشكل شريط صوتي، يمكنك أن تطلب من القسم الاتصال بمعلومات المريض على الرقم: 01223216032 أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني: [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Cantonese

如您需以另一語言版本、特大字體或錄音形式索取本資料，請要求部門聯絡病人諮詢服務：電話 01223 216032，電郵地址 [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Turkish

Eğer bu bilgileri başka bir dilde veya büyük baskılı veya sesli olarak isterseniz, lütfen bulunduğunuz bölümdeki görevlilere söyleyin Hasta Bilgilendirme servisini arasinlar: 01223 216032 veya [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Urdu

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دیگر زبان میں، بڑے الفاظ میں یا آڈیو طریقہ سے درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی اس شعبہ سے پیشینٹ انفارمیشن سے ذیل کے ذریعہ رابطہ کرنے کی درخواست کریں: 01223 216032 یا [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Bengali

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য অন্য কোন ভাষায়, বড় অক্ষরে বা অডিও রেকর্ডিং পেতে চান তাহলে 'প্যাশেন্ট ইনফরমেশান' এর সঙ্গে 01223 216032 নম্বরে ফোন করে বা [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk) ঠিকানায় ই-মেইল করে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য ডিপার্টমেন্টটিতে অনুরোধ জানান।

## Document history

Authors	Acute Pain Service
Department	Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ <a href="http://www.cuh.org.uk">www.cuh.org.uk</a>
Contact number	01223 245151
Publish/Review date	July 2010/July 2013 (no changes made)
File name	Info_PCA.doc
Version number/Ref	4/PIN762