Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) Pump Use

What is a PCA pump?
It is a machine designed so you can give yourself IV pain medicine. You can get medicine when you feel you need it and without having to wait for the nurse.

What are the benefits of having a PCA (Patient Controlled Analgesia)? Patients report a better overall level of pain relief as compared to injections. In addition, there is less drowsiness than with injections. Also, most patients would rather have medicine delivered into their IV than to get injections of pain medicine into their arm or leg.

How does a PCA pump work?
The pump is set up according to what your doctor prescribes. When you feel you need pain medicine, you push the button. You will hear a beep that lets you know the pump got your request for medicine. A prescribed amount of medicine is delivered to you through your IV.

Are PCA pumps safe? They have been used for many years and have a number of safety features included that are designed to prevent overdosage.

Can I get too much medicine?
The doctor will prescribe a specific amount of pain medicine just for you. The PCA pump will then be set up as to how much medicine you can give yourself and how often.

Push the button every time you hurt. A limit will be set on the PCA pump so you cannot give yourself too much medicine.

Can anyone push the button?
You know best when you are hurting and when you are not. If you are sleeping, then you probably are not hurting. If someone else pushes the button for you while you are asleep, you could be getting too much medicine.

For patient safety to prevent getting too much medicine, only the patient should push the PCA button.

What if I am still hurting?
We will be asking you to rate your pain on a scale of 0 – 10. These numbers let us know how you are doing. The pump settings can be changed to help you get better pain relief.