You can now help control your pain relief

Your doctor has prescribed patient-controlled analgesia or PCA therapy to help control your pain during your hospital stay. A PCA device will be used to allow you to give yourself small doses of medicine when you need it. Your healthcare team will review the use of the PCA device with you. The following information will also help you understand these instructions. If you have questions regarding PCA, be sure to ask your healthcare team.

How PCA works

• The PCA device is programmed to deliver the medication in the correct dose for you as prescribed by your doctor.

• When you have pain, you can press the button on the dose request handset at your bedside to give yourself a small dose of pain medication.

• The pain medication is delivered through your intravenous (IV) line and may be in addition to any other medications you are receiving.

• After each dose, you must wait a prescribed amount of time (lock-out) before you can give yourself another dose. If you press the button before the time has elapsed, the PCA device does not deliver medication. This ensures that you receive only the amount of medication prescribed to you.

• Once therapy starts, your healthcare team will closely monitor your response to the medication, which may include your pain level and other vital signs.

Caution: Carefully locate the patient request cord to reduce the possibility of entanglement or strangulation.

When to alert your Nurse or Doctor

Some pain medications may cause side effects, so be sure to tell your healthcare team if you experience any symptoms or discomfort during your PCA therapy.

Remember: You are the only one who should push the button to give yourself medicine. Do not allow others to push the button for you unless your healthcare team instructs you otherwise. Always carefully follow your healthcare team’s instructions.