PAIN:
YOU AND YOUR PCA PUMP
(PATIENT-CONTROLLED ANALGESIA)

WHAT IS A PUMP?
A PCA pump is a machine that gives pain medicine into the blood stream.

WHY IS IT ORDERED?
To help you and your nurse control your pain.

WHAT TYPE OF PAIN MEDICINE IS USED?
Your doctor will choose a pain medicine to put in your PCA pump, such as
- Morphine
- Demerol
- Dilaudid
- Fentanyl

Tell your doctor if you are allergic to any medicines. You may feel some side effects, such as
- itching
- upset stomach
- sleepiness

If you are sleeping too much, your doctor can readjust your medicine. If you have an upset stomach or itching, your nurse may give you other medicines to help you with those side effects.

HOW DO I USE MY PCA PUMP?
The pump can give:
1. a continuous medicine dose
2. a dose of medicine only when you push the button
3. both at the same time – This helps when you have breakthrough pain (periods of increased pain) or if you are about to have additional pain from a procedure or position change by helping to prevent more pain.

If your pump is set so that you can give yourself medicine, you must hit the button connected to the pump, which your nurse will show you how to use. Push this button if your pain increases and you feel you need more medicine.

**CAN I GIVE MYSELF TOO MUCH MEDICINE?**

**YOU CANNOT GIVE YOURSELF TOO MUCH MEDICINE.**

- You need to push your button whenever you feel pain.
- You may not always receive extra medicine when you push the button. If you have received the amount your doctor thinks you can receive in a certain time period, the pump will not release the medicine.
- Your push will be recorded even if medicine is not delivered. That way, your safety is ensured, and you and the nurses can decide if your pain is being controlled appropriately.
- Your nurse will check you and your pump at least every 4 hours. Your nurse will ask about your pain level at those times.

**HOW DO I RATE MY PAIN?**

There are 3 rating charts that UMC uses to measure pain.

- **The FACES scale** uses facial expression to communicate levels of pain.
- **The Numbered scale** applies 0-10 for degrees of pain.
- **The FLACC scale** generally is used for infants or person unable to communicate.

These charts rate your pain from 0 to 10 with 0 being no pain through 10, which is the most pain you can imagine. These ratings help the nurse to control your pain better.
Even if you score your pain on the lower end of the scale, you can receive pain medicine. **Always** tell your nurse when you feel you need pain medicine.

**WHAT OTHER THINGS CAN I DO TO CONTROL MY PAIN?**

There are things in addition to pain medication that you can try to decrease your pain.

1. **Relax and imagine**-Relax by listening to calming music, meditating, or slowly breathing in and out. Imagine you are in a peaceful place or some place quiet that you have always wanted to go.
2. **Distraction**-Sing to yourself, count, listen to music, watch TV, visit with family and friends, play a game, color, or listen to someone read to you.
3. **Adjust your room**--Reduce the lighting, turn off loud noises, or change the temperature, if these things worsen pain.
4. **Apply heat or cold**-Use cool cloths to your forehead for headaches or warm cloths to places of muscle soreness. **BE SURE TO LET YOUR NURSE TEST THE CLOTHS FOR THE RIGHT TEMPERATURE.**
5. **Massage**-Massage sore or stiff muscles or ask a family member, friend, or your nurse to massage the place for you.