

NEWS RELEASE
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For immediate release

Yorkton Regional Health Centre Introducing Pain Management Options

Sunrise Health Region has initiated a new way for post-surgery patients to monitor their pain using an IV pain management method called Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA). PCA provides the patient with a special IV pump which is programmed to deliver small doses of pain killers at the touch of a button whenever the patient feels it is needed, giving patients more control over their pain.

Moderate to severe pain after a surgery is often expected, however research now shows that past attitudes of individuals automatically expecting that surgery will cause pain that needs to be tolerated are no longer justified. Undertreated pain can delay the healing process and lead to serious complications during recovery. Historically, patients recovering from surgery would receive pain medication as a direct injection into the muscle. As a result, some patients may wait until their pain is intolerable before requesting pain medication, in which case higher doses may need to be administered to make the patient comfortable again.

"It is important that patients who are having surgery speak with their surgeon ahead of time," said Glen-mary Christopher, Nursing Clinical Instructor with Sunrise Health Region. "By talking about what to expect in terms of pain after the operation and making a plan to control it, patients are able to take a proactive approach to their own pain management."

Patients who are eligible to use the Patient Controlled Analgesia device will wake up after surgery with the PCA pump hooked to their intravenous (IV) line. When pain is felt, a button connected to the machine can be pushed which delivers a small dose of medication. All PCA devices are programmed with a "lockout period" which does not allow any additional medication to be released at the push of the button until the lockout period has passed (lockout periods are a minimum of five minutes). Limiting the time between button presses ensures that the patient will not receive an excess amount of pain medication at one time and allows the body to properly respond to the medication.

"By utilizing PCA, patients can receive smaller, more regular doses of their pain medication," continued Christopher. "Smaller doses are beneficial in reducing side effects and giving the patient the power to control their pain all the time even when coping with potentially painful recovery exercises such as walking, deep breathing and turning in bed."

PCA is not an option for every patient who has surgery at the Yorkton Regional Health Centre, but for those who are eligible, the device provides a level of personal control and discretion in managing their pain and recovery post-surgery.

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For information about this news release or to arrange interviews, please contact Sharon Tropin, Director of Communications 306.786.0144.

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