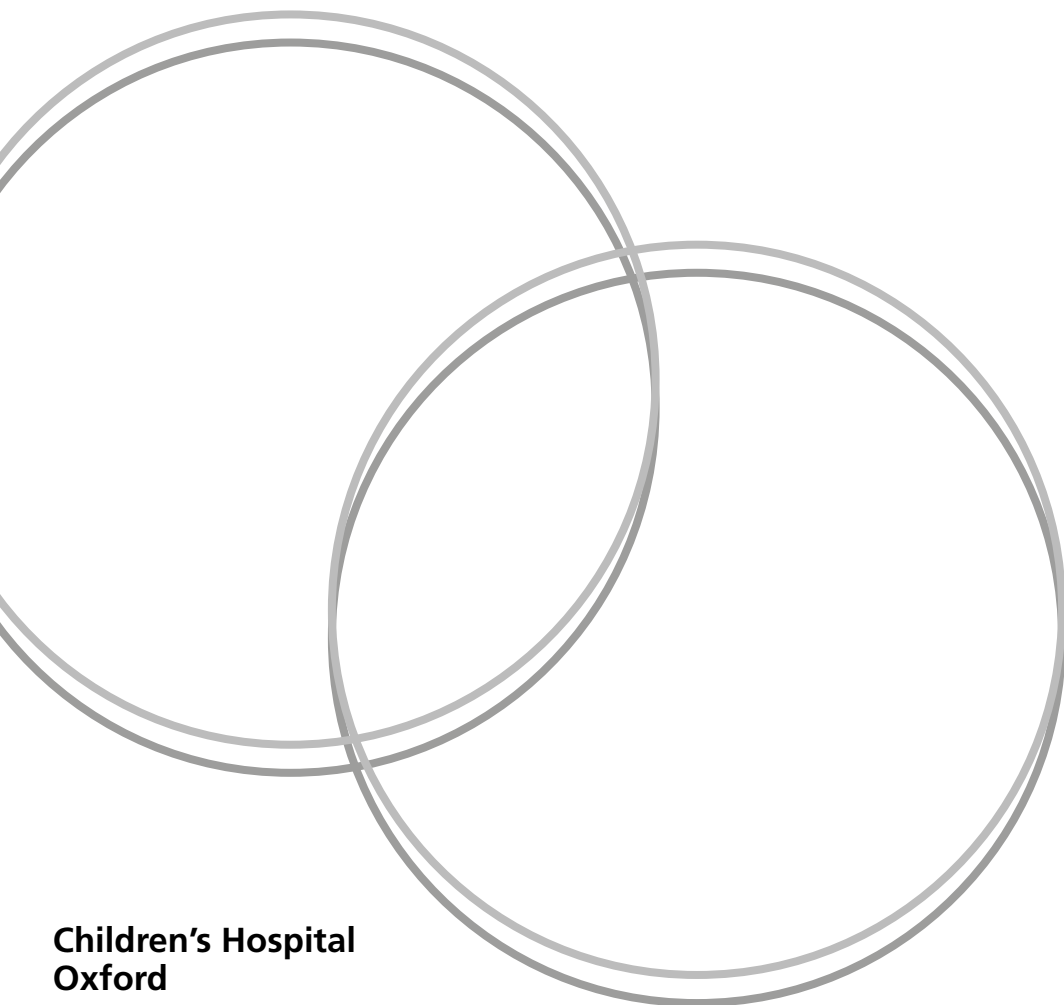




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Nurse Controlled Analgesia (NCA)

Information for parents and carers



**Children's Hospital
Oxford**

This information leaflet explains about Nurse Controlled Analgesia (NCA) and why this might be used for your child.

Before the NCA is started, a healthcare professional will explain to you how it used. They will be able to answer any questions you may have.

What is Nurse Controlled Analgesia (NCA)?

This is a way of giving strong pain relieving medicines (such as morphine) to your child, after a painful operation or during a painful illness whilst in hospital. The medication will be given through a narrow tube, called a cannula, into a vein in your child's arm or hand. As the name suggests, your child's nurse will control how much medication is given to your child, to help manage their pain.

Why might my child need NCA?

NCA can be used for infants and young children who are not old enough or physically able to use Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) to control their own pain relief. Please ask for our leaflet on PCA for more information.

How does it work?

An electronic pump will be programmed by a nurse or doctor to give your child a constant dose (infusion) of the correct amount of pain relieving medicine. A tube from the NCA pump will be attached to the cannula.

Your child's nurse can give extra doses of the medication if your child needs more pain relief, by pressing a button. It takes about 5 minutes for the dose of medicine to work.

Only the nurse will be allowed give extra doses, as we need to be able to record how much medication your child has had.

Is NCA safe?

The pump is programmed so that your child can not receive too much pain relieving medicine. The pump has a 'lockout' period after an extra dose has been given, which means another dose cannot be administered for a set amount of time.

The ward nurses will be monitoring your child while they have NCA. They will assess their pain levels, how sleepy they are, their heart rate, breathing and blood pressure.

Are there any side effects?

Morphine is a strong pain-relieving medicine and is commonly used with NCA. Side effects of morphine vary with every child, but they may experience drowsiness, nausea and vomiting, itchiness, dizziness, unusual dreams and slow breathing. The ward nurse will monitor your child for these side effects, but if you have any concerns please tell them.

What if the NCA is not working?

Your child's nurse will carry out regular pain assessments, to make sure the NCA is working well for your child. If it is not working as well as it could, the nurse and Pain Management team will assess whether the NCA pump dose needs to be adjusted. If you think your child is in pain, please tell their nurse.

How long can the NCA be used for?

The NCA can be used for between 2 to 5 days, but sometimes for longer. When the time is right, usually when your child's pain has reduced and they don't need as much pain-relieving medicine, the NCA will be stopped. Depending on your child's level of pain, they will then be given other medicines, usually by mouth.

If NCA is not suitable for your child we can use other methods of pain relief.

If you have any further questions, please speak to your child's nurse.

If you need an interpreter or would like this information leaflet in another format, such as Easy Read, large print, Braille, audio, electronically or another language, please speak to the department where you are being seen. You will find their contact details on your appointment letter.

Making a difference across our hospitals

charity@ouh.nhs.uk | 01865 743 444 | hospitalcharity.co.uk

OXFORD HOSPITALS CHARITY (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1175809)

**Oxford
Hospitals
Charity**

Author: Children's Inpatient Management of Pain Service (ChIMPS)

January 2020

Review: January 2023

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

www.ouh.nhs.uk/information

