Intermountain® Healthcare

Implanted Infusion Pumps

What are implanted infusion pumps?

Implanted infusion pumps are small devices surgically implanted under your skin. The pump sends medication through a small, flexible tube (called a catheter) to a specific part of your body.

Infusion pumps provide targeted and consistent medication to reduce your pain. They are used when other methods don't work or when you need long-term medications or fluids.

What your healthcare provider does

Your healthcare provider schedules routine follow-up visits to check your pump and prevent problems. During these appointments, your provider may test the pump's alarm, letting you hear the sound it makes so that you know what kinds of sounds may alert you to an emergency. Your provider also makes sure your pump is working correctly and the battery is still good. However, you should learn about the features of your pump — and what to watch for or report to prevent problems.

What you can do

Day to day, you don't need to do anything with your pump, but you should be aware of the following:

- **Know the alarms.** Your pump has one or more alarms that alert you that the battery is running out or the pump is malfunctioning. Call your healthcare provider immediately if you hear an alarm.
- **Pay attention to how you're feeling.** Talk to your healthcare provider about signs and symptoms to watch out for and when to seek medical attention. These may include change in your pain, new pain, numbness or tingling, bowel or bladder problems, new muscular weakness, and changes in reflexes.
- **Before procedures, tell other healthcare providers that you have an infusion pump.** Some medical procedures, such as MRIs and radiation therapy, can affect your pump. (Basic x-rays are unlikely to affect your pump.)
- **Be aware of risks of electromagnetic interference (EMI).** Your pump may be affected by sources of strong EMI (such as power stations and laser procedures). Refer to the package insert or talk to your healthcare provider for more information.
- **Avoid long periods of time at high temperatures.** Temperatures above 102°F can affect the flow rate of the pump. A quick shower won't affect your pump, but you should avoid hot tubs, saunas, and steam rooms. In addition, call your healthcare provider if you have a fever of 102°F or higher.
- **Avoid exercises involving twisting or stretching.** Sudden, excessive, or repetitive bending or twisting can damage your pump. Talk to your healthcare provider about the types of activities you should avoid.
- **Don't rub or push the pump.** Rubbing or moving the pump can cause skin erosion, and it can damage the pump or its parts.

How can I find out more about my infusion pump?

Your infusion pump comes with a package insert that provides specific information. You may also receive a manual with directions and information; if not, you may be able to find a manual on the Internet.

In addition, talk to your healthcare provider about your pump and the medications you're receiving.

Benefits and risks of therapies provided via implanted infusion pumps

Potential benefits	Risks and potential complications
• Delivers targeted medication throughout the day to a specific part of your body • Requires less medication than other administration methods because the medication doesn't have to go through the entire body • Alleviates chronic pain when oral, IV, or topical medications fail • Reduces side effects when compared to other forms of the same medication • Avoids the discomfort of catheters through the skin or injections directly into the spine • Allows you to increase your activity level as you live with less pain and better symptom management	As with any **surgery**, there are risks: • Pain or infection at the implant site or spinal canal • Bruising, bleeding, swelling, infection, spinal fluid leak, headache, paralysis (spinal surgery risks) • Blood clots, bleeding or loss of blood, stroke, organ failure, death (vein or artery surgery risks) The risks and potential complications arising because of **mechanical problems** (e.g., gears stopping or stalling, battery dying, etc.) include: • Tissue or skin damage • Loss of or change in therapy (overdose, underdose, or stop of medication) • Serious nerve or spinal cord injury, including paralysis • Return of underlying symptoms • Drug withdrawal symptoms • Serious injury or death • Need for surgery to replace the pump if it stops working **Medication side effects:** Talk to your healthcare provider about the risks and potential side effects for the medications you'll receive through your pump.

Use of infusion pumps with unapproved medications

Your infusion pump is FDA-approved for specific medications and formulas. Your healthcare provider may prescribe medications that aren't approved. If your provider elects to use a medication that isn't approved by the infusion pump manufacturer, this may affect how your device works over the duration of your therapy.

Using unapproved medications in your infusion system could damage the pump motor. This could result in increased risk to you due to loss or change in therapy — including serious injury and death. Some infusion pump manufacturers have found that certain medications erode the gears of the pumps, making the gears stall and the device stop working. When only approved medications are used in infusion pumps, 2 to 3 pumps out of 100 stall after about 6 years; when unapproved medications are used, 7 to 8 out of 100 stall in the same time period.

If you have questions about the medication in your pump, ask your healthcare provider.

Acknowledgement of unapproved medications

❑ Check if this patient will be receiving a pump filled with an unapproved formula or medication or a prescription for an unapproved formula or medication. If checked, place or scan this signed document into the patient file and give a copy to the patient.

I understand that my healthcare provider has prescribed an unapproved medication or formula for my infusion pump and that this increases the risk of motor stall of the infusion pump. After discussing the risks and benefits with my healthcare provider, I am willing to take the risk because I believe that the benefits of the therapy outweigh the risks. I have had an opportunity to read the information in this document (and in the manufacturer's publications expressly warning against unapproved medications) and ask questions.

Patient's Signature:_____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____