

# **The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

## **Pre-Filled Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) Syringes**

Effective: March 2011

Review: March 2013

### **1. Introduction**

This policy outlines the method for the storage and use of pre-filled PCA syringes whenever they are in use. The policy will be of interest to all staff involved in the use of PCA infusions.

### **2. Pre-filled Syringes (PCAs)**

Pre-filled syringes containing Morphine Sulphate 50mg in 50ml of Sodium Chloride 0.9% are available from pharmacy and are supplied in bags containing 5 syringes.

### **3. Ordering PCAs**

- 3.1 Drugs diluted in this way have a short shelf life (approx. 4-6 weeks) and therefore, it is important to anticipate the stock required as accurately as possible to avoid waste. A specific PCA request book must be used and on receipt of these drugs from pharmacy, they must be entered in to the specific PCA Controlled Drug Register.
- 3.2 Syringes should normally be ordered in multiples of 5
- 3.3 Expired pre-filled syringes must be returned to pharmacy for disposal.
- 3.4 Wards not regularly using pre-filled PCA syringes, who require ONE syringe for immediate use, may order this from pharmacy. The usual procedure for ordering Controlled Drugs must be followed using the ordinary Controlled Drug order book and register.

### **4. Storage of PCAs**

- 4.1 Pre-filled Syringes must be stored in a locked refrigerator that must not be readily mobile.
- 4.2 The fridge must have a clasp lock with a padlock. The fridge must be kept locked and the key must be with the controlled drug cupboard key, separate from the other drug cupboard keys, and kept on the person of the nurse in charge of the ward.
- 4.3 The fridge must be fixed to the wall and / or a bench

- 4.4 The fridge must be kept clean and frost free and checked for temperature control weekly. If out of range it must be reported immediately to the Estates Department.
- 4.5 The pre-filled syringes containing controlled drugs are subject to the same weekly controlled drug checks as any other ward controlled drug. The results of this must be recorded in the pre-filled syringe register and signed by both nurses.

## **5. Administration of PCAs**

- 5.1 Wash hands using bacterial soap and water and dry before commencement.
- 5.2 The pre-filled syringes are prescribed on the opioid / PCA infusion prescription chart and documented on the patient's medicine chart in the 'Other Charts in Use' section. A PCA warning sticker **MUST** be applied to the medicine chart to indicate that a PCA is in progress and therefore no additional opioids should be administered.
- 5.3 The use of pre-filled syringes containing controlled drugs must be accounted for and documented in the register specifically designated for that purpose.
- 5.4 Enter the patient's name, hospital number and ward area on the pre-filled syringe in the space provided on the existing label.

## **6. Disposal of Unused Controlled Drug from PCAs**

Disposal of unused controlled drug from PCAs should be in accordance with the Medicine Policy.

## **7. Borrowing of PCAs**

This should rarely be necessary and only when pharmacy is closed. The procedure should follow 'Borrowing of Drugs Out of Hours – Controlled Drugs' in the Medicine Policy.

**Author: Chief Pharmacist**