

Remifentanyl PCA for women in Labour - Patient Information Leaflet

What is Remifentanyl?

- Remifentanyl is a strong pain relieving medicine.
- It belongs to the same group of drugs as Morphine, Pethidine and Diamorphine.
- Research and studies have shown that Remifentanyl is safe for labouring women and their babies, and that it is effective in providing pain relief.

What are the benefits of Remifentanyl?

- It works very quickly to provide you pain relief during labour.
- It is removed by the body very quickly, so it has very few side effects for you and your baby.
- You are in control of your pain relief.
- You are only allowed to have Remifentanyl PCA **4 HOURS** after your last diamorphine/pethidine injection.

What are the possible risks and side effects of Remifentanyl?

- Sleepiness
- Itching
- Sickness
- Reduced breathing
- As Remifentanyl is removed from the body quickly and side effects are short lived.

What does a Remifentanyl PCA involve?

- A special pump called a PCA (patient controlled analgesia) will be given to you to provide the Remifentanyl PCA during labour.
- The PCA will connect to a small drip in your arm or hand.
- You have a button to press to give yourself the Remifentanyl.
- **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ONLY YOU PRESS THE BUTTON**
- The machine has a safety mechanism. It will only give one dose every 2 minutes, when you press the button.
- We advise that you press the button with the very first sensation of a contraction, so the Remifentanyl will be working as the contraction builds.
- It may take a few contractions to learn how and when to press the button. The Anaesthetist and Midwife will help you with this.
- Whilst you are using the Remifentanyl PCA, you will be given oxygen.
- We will keep a close eye on your oxygen levels via a clip on your finger and your breathing rate.
- Your baby will be monitored.
- Your midwife will keep a close eye on you and an Anaesthetist will be available if needed.
- Any side effects will be short lived once you stop using the PCA. All effects should be gone in 15 minutes.

Further Information

The Anaesthetist on Central Birth Suite will happily discuss Remifentanyl PCA with you when you arrive and answer any questions you may have.