



## *Information for You from Your Health Care Team*

### **Intrathecal Morphine Pump Placement**

#### **What is an Intrathecal Morphine Pump?**

An Intrathecal Morphine Pump is a special device that delivers continuous small amounts of Morphine into the spinal cord area via a small tube (catheter). It is an effective method of controlling pain.

#### **When is an Intrathecal Morphine Pump used?**

An Intrathecal Morphine Pump is used for cancer pain and chronic pain that does not respond to other pain treatment methods.

#### **Where is the tubing and pump inserted?**

The tubing is inserted in the midline at the lower back. The pump is implanted on the abdominal wall.

#### **What happens during the placement of the Intrathecal Morphine Pump?**

You are admitted to the hospital for placement of a spinal catheter. The placement of the catheter is done in two stages. In the first stage a catheter is placed into the spinal column under local anesthesia. Once the morphine infusion begins you will be assessed for effectiveness of the medicine in controlling your pain. You will also be screened for any unwanted side effects. This usually takes two or three days. Next, a neurosurgery evaluation will be done for the placement of the permanent pump.

The insertion of the permanent pump takes place in the operation room. General anesthesia will be used which means you will be asleep for the procedure. The temporary catheter is removed and a new one is connected to the pump which will be placed in the abdomen under the skin.

#### **How long does the pump last?**

The pump will need to be refilled at least every 3 months. This is done by inserting a needle through the abdominal wall. The batteries in the pump last from about 3 to 5 years. This depends upon the usage. At that time the pump will need to be replaced as the batteries cannot be replaced.

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## **Intrathecal Morphine Pump Placement** *Continued*

### **What are the advantages of using the Intrathecal Morphine Pump?**

Improved pain control due to the continuous delivery of the medicine into spinal cord.  
There are less side effects as the medicine is given in smaller doses.  
It is a safer way to control pain than some of the other options available.

### **What are the possible complications?**

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Pump malfunction
- Neurological injury
- Risks of general anesthesia and surgery