

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.