

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PROCEDURE

PUMP IMPLANTATION

How we do the procedure

A **pump implantation** involves minor same day surgery to place a Medtronic Synchromed programmable narcotic or baclofen pump and intrathecal or spinal catheter under the skin that is used to deliver small amounts of medication into the spinal fluid space to reduce pain. Before a pump implantation is considered, patients must have gone through a psychological clearance and a successful inpatient intrathecal or epidural infusion trial. The surgery takes about an hour and a half. It is done with local skin infiltration of an anesthetic (numbing medicine) and intravenous (IV) sedation administered by an anesthesiologist who will be there to monitor your vital signs during the surgery. Typically, you will be able to go home within a few hours after the surgery is completed. We will see you in the office frequently over the next few weeks to get the right amount of medication delivered to keep you comfortable. This needs to be done slowly to avoid any side effects. The pump has an 18cc reservoir. This means that refills can be spaced apart by 8-12 weeks most of the time. Refills are done through the skin with a needle after sterilizing the skin with an antiseptic and numbing it. We use a computer programmer to tell the pump how much medicine to give you.

What to expect

The surgical incisions will hurt for a few days. There is always a chance of wound infections even with prophylactic antibiotics and utmost sterile technique. Watch for redness, severe swelling and pain, drainage, and fever. If a significant infection occurs, we may have to remove the pump and catheter. The possible side effects from chronic narcotic infusions are sedation, confusion, slowing of breathing, nausea, constipation, urinary retention, itching, feet swelling, joint pains, and even impotence. How you responded during your trial is a good predictor of how you will do after the implantation.

Safety Precautions

Since your ability to drive may be impaired for a few hours, someone must drive you home after the surgery. Once we have stabilized the medication dose you receive through the pump and we see how you react, we will reevaluate your ability to drive.

If you develop any significant problems, please call us so that we may recommend appropriate actions or, if you feel that it is a serious problem, go to the emergency room for evaluation.