Intrathecal (IT) Catheter Trial (Inpatient Instructions)

Why an IT catheter trial?

Your pain doctor thinks you are a good candidate for a trial of an intrathecal (IT) catheter to treat your pain. This involves placing a thin flexible tube, about the size and thickness of fishing line, to send pain medicine directly to your nervous system through the spine and spinal fluid. Taking part in this trial will tell us how well IT therapy may work for you on a long-term basis. The goal of IT drug therapy is to have better pain control with fewer side effects (sedation, confusion, nausea, vomiting, itching, constipation, urinary retention, etc.). IT drug therapy uses much less pain medicine, as it is much more potent when given into the spinal fluid versus by mouth, IV or skin patch.

Preparing for the procedure

Plan to be in the Outpatient Pain Clinic about two hours for the procedure. The procedure will take about 30 to 40 minutes. You will be an inpatient for approximately 3 to 5 days. During that time, your doctor will be trying various medicines through the catheter and evaluating your pain response. Your nurse will give you specific instructions on how to prepare for the procedure.

- If you are diabetic, please let your pain doctor or nurse know so we can adjust your medication.
- You may take your usual medicine with a sip of water, unless told otherwise.
- **Before your procedure, please tell your doctor if you have any allergies or take any blood thinning medication.**

During the procedure

- You may have an intravenous (IV) line started.
- You will lie on your abdomen.
- A nurse will monitor your blood pressure and heart rate.
- The area (usually mid-back) will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and then draped with sterile towels.
- The skin will be numbed with a local anesthetic.
- Your doctor will use X-ray to guide the placement of the catheter.
- The catheter will be secured and you will be taken to an observation room.

After the procedure

- You will be taken to an observation room and then transferred to a hospital room.
- You and your doctor will work together to adjust medicines used in order to achieve the best results. This is a process to see what medicine works best for you.
- During the trial, your doctor may adjust your oral pain medicines.
- The catheter will be removed before you are discharged from the hospital.

After discharge, please call us:

- If you have excessive or abnormal bleeding, persistent chills, or fever of 100º F.
- If there is a major change in the pattern or level of your pain.
- If you get a severe headache that does not go away with usual treatment methods.

If you have stopped your blood-thinning medicine, check with your doctor about taking this again.

In case of emergency, call your doctor. If you cannot reach a doctor, go to the nearest emergency room and ask them to call your doctor.

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.