

# Your Health Education

## PCA Pump (Patient Controlled Analgesia): Alaris® Pain Pump and Breath Monitoring Device

### **Pain Medicine and Breath Monitoring**

Your pain medicine is being given on a pain pump with a breath monitor connected as an added safety feature. This brochure tells you what to expect and why the breath monitor is so important. Our goal is to make sure you are safe and able to breathe. We are here to help you and to answer any questions.

### **Breath Monitoring Measures:**

- The carbon dioxide in your breath each time that you breathe in and breathe out
- The number of breaths you take each minute

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Why do I need breath monitoring?** A side effect of pain medicine is that it can slow down or stop your breathing, which can be very harmful or even life-threatening.

**How does breath monitoring work?** The plastic tubing under your nose gives you oxygen and is connected to a breath monitor. The plastic bubble measures the number of your breaths and how well you are breathing. If your breathing slows down or stops, the breath monitor will alarm, shut down the pain pump, and alert your nurse.

### **Why are there 3 prongs—2 in my nose and 1 towards my mouth?**

Sometimes you may breathe from your mouth and other times from your nose. These prongs will monitor your breathing from your nose or mouth.

### **The alarms on the monitor make noise and wake me up; is this necessary?**

Yes, it is. From time to time, you should expect to hear the alarm and wake up. Think of the monitor as an alarm clock reminding you to breathe deeply. The alarm is important for your safety.

**Can I drink liquids while I have this on?** You can drink liquids when your nurse tells you that it is okay. It may be easier to drink with a straw.

**How long will I be monitored?** Your nurse and doctor will talk to each other and decide how long is best for you. The length of time may vary from a few hours to a few days.

**For your safety, please do not remove your nasal breath monitor without permission.**

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