

Intrathecal Baclofen (ITB) Pumps

The following information is designed to help answer commonly asked questions regarding intrathecal baclofen pumps. We also encourage you to write down any other questions and discuss these with your rehabilitation specialist or neurosurgeon.

How often will the pump need to be refilled?

Baclofen pump refills will occur every 1-6 months depending on the dose your child needs. The first refill may not be for several months after the operation but may be more often after that. This is because your child will start on a very small dose and it will initially take longer for the dose to run out. Refilling of the pump will generally occur in the Paediatric Rehabilitation Department.

How long will the pump last?

The battery in the pump lasts for about five to seven years. This means your child will need another operation to replace the pump at that time.

What is my child able to do following pump implantation?

After the surgery, your child can gradually return to all prior activities, such as returning to school, sitting in their wheelchair, or using a standing frame.

There are some activities your child needs to avoid for at least six weeks after surgery. Your child is **not allowed** to:

- > lie on their tummy, roll onto the pump, or do any activities which require excessive twisting or bending of their trunk.
- > go swimming or have a bath.

Clearance for the above activities will be reviewed by your neurosurgeon at the outpatient appointment six weeks after surgery. Make sure you ask the surgeon about swimming if your child regularly swims, and also discuss starting any other new activities such as sports into the future with your child's rehabilitation specialist or neurosurgeon.

Will my child's wheelchair need to be modified?

Any straps or supports on your child's wheelchair, standing frame or other equipment should not sit directly over the pump. This should be reviewed by your therapist in consultation with your rehabilitation specialist.

Can the pump be exposed to very hot or very cold temperatures?

The pump is designed to tolerate a wide range of temperatures. It is fine to use both hot and cold packs near the pump. Spa baths are fine once cleared for bathing and swimming, but saunas should be avoided.

What happens at the airport at the security check-in?

The pump is made of metal and will set the alarms off. You can ask your rehabilitation specialist for a letter to explain the pump. The scanners will not affect the way the pump works.

Can my child have a scan or xray?

A patient with a pump can safely have an xray or ultrasound.

If your child needs an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scan you must tell the Medical imaging staff and Paediatric Rehabilitation team as soon as your MRI appointment has been booked. The MRI scanner's magnetic field will temporarily stop the pump's motor from turning and so will stop the delivery of baclofen. Once the MRI scan has finished, the pump will spontaneously restart but should still be rechecked by your child's rehabilitation specialist.



What if my child needs to have surgery after the pump is implanted?

It is important to tell the surgeon that “monopolar cautery can interfere with the pump program”. Ask the surgeon to contact the Paediatric Rehabilitation team for more information.

If your child requires a lumbar puncture or epidural, the Paediatric Rehabilitation consultant on-call must be contacted first.

Will the ITB pump be affected by anything else?

The pump is designed to not be affected by common household appliances. This includes microwave ovens, television, radios, mobile phones and video games.

Possible complications of ITB therapy

- > Underdose/overdose of baclofen
- > Infection of pump or catheter
- > Infection of wound
- > Catheter kink (i.e. bent tubing) – preventing the flow of baclofen
- > Catheter break – causing leak of baclofen
- > Catheter disconnection from pump – preventing baclofen from reaching the spinal cord
- > Pump malfunction i.e. pump not working properly.

Please contact the Rehabilitation team:

- > If your child has a temperature higher than 38 degrees Celsius
- > You notice any redness or inflammation around the scar
- > You notice any swelling around the pump area
- > If your child is drowsy or you can't wake them
- > If you think your child is too 'floppy'
- > If your child is unusually sweaty, itchy or grumpy

- > If you are concerned about the pump
- > If you hear beeping from the pump

Signs of baclofen overdose

- > Slow or shallow breathing
- > Drowsiness
- > Light headedness
- > Seizures
- > Loss of consciousness

Signs of baclofen underdose

- > Itchiness
- > High temperature
- > Confusion
- > Spastic or rigid muscles
- > Grumpiness or irritability

What do I do if we hear the pump beeping?

The pump has two alarms: a critical alarm (two tone) and a non-critical alarm (single tone).

Your rehabilitation specialist will demonstrate these alarms to you prior to your child's discharge.

If you hear the critical alarm you must bring your child to hospital immediately. If you hear the non critical alarm you should contact your child's Paediatric Rehabilitation specialist.

Who should I contact?

If you suspect that your child is displaying any of the signs and symptoms listed, please call the Hospital on 8161 7000 and ask to speak to the Rehabilitation Consultant on call. There is a Rehabilitation Consultant on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In an emergency situation, dial 000 ('triple zero') for an ambulance. You should also ensure you always have a supply of oral baclofen to be used only if directed by the Rehabilitation Consultant.

For more information

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www.wch.sa.gov.au**