
What is “pain and sedation management”?

Pain management is the use of pain medicines to help your child be as comfortable as possible. Sedation is the use of medicines to help keep your child calm and quiet.

Why do we use pain and sedation management for your child?

Both are important for your child’s comfort and well-being while on the ventilator (or breathing machine). The care team uses these medicines for many reasons:

- While your child is very ill, they will need a lot of medical support. Their body is working hard to get well. Sometimes, it is important for your child to be sedated to allow time for healing.
- We want your child to be comfortable and calm. We assess and treat pain often, but please let us know if you think your child is in pain or uncomfortable.
- We also want to ensure your child does not pull out lines, tubes and equipment.

When do we use these medicines?

Your child’s doctor will order these medicines when your child has:

- A breathing tube (intubated) and is on the breathing machine (ventilator).
- Pain from illness or injuries.

How can you help your child while he needs sedation?

You can help your child by doing these things:

- Keep the room as quiet and calm as possible.
- Keep conversations in the room quiet and stress-free.
- Hold your child’s hand, and speak in a quiet, soothing voice.
- Tell the nurse if you think your child is in pain or seems uncomfortable.
- Ask us about any concerns you have. You know your child best. We want to hear your concerns.

How can you care for your child after sedation?

- Do not give your child anything to eat or drink until they are fully awake and alert, or as your doctor instructs.
- Some children may become restless, agitated or combative from the medicine. Calm and reassure your child if this happens. This does not last long and should wear off within a few hours.
- Keep the lights, activity and noise levels low until your child is fully awake. This is to promote a restful environment.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Sedation in the PICU, continued

How do we give your child these medicines?

Our pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) doctors order your child's medicines. The doctors may order medicine the nurse can give based on your child's behavior or pain symptoms. If these are not helpful, the nurse will contact the doctor for other advice.

Your child's medicines:

- May be different than those ordered for another child.
- May change during the PICU stay.
- May be given continuously through an I.V. pump, in small doses as needed, or in a pill or liquid to swallow. (Continuous medicine may be turned off one time each day so we can let your child wake up as their condition allows.)

What are some medicines that may be ordered for my child?

Some medicines that may be ordered for your child are listed in the chart below. Please ask your child's doctor or nurse if you have any questions.

Medicine name	How it helps your child	When it is used
Precedex	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sedation medicine• May be used alone or with other medicine for pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For sedation• For procedures• Allows your child to sleep when left alone and to wake up when needed
Morphine Fentanyl Dilaudid	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain medicine• Helps to relieve pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For pain• For procedures and pain
Norcuron Rocuronium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Used to paralyze the muscles• Stops your child from being able to move	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When your child is very ill or when on certain types of life support
Ativan or Versed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sedation medicine• Helps your child to relax, be calm and not remember this time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For sedation• For procedures
Ketamine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps with sedation and pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For sedation• For procedures and pain

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Sedation in the PICU, continued

Medicine name	How it helps your child	When it is used
Methadone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps come off I.V. pain medicine little by little (wean)• Helps prevent drug withdrawal symptoms<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Children do not become “addicted” to pain medicine in the PICU, but their bodies can become dependent.– This is why your child may need medicine to help prevent withdrawal symptoms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For children who have been on continuous I.V. pain medicine for many days
Valium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps come off I.V. sedation little by little (wean)• Helps prevent drug withdrawal symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For children who have been on continuous I.V. sedation for many days

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child’s doctor or a member of your child’s healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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