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Management of Patients on Self-Administered Intravenous Therapy

Self-administration of intravenous therapy has become an option for patients undergoing treatment of a variety of conditions. After placement of a PICC line or an indwelling central catheter, patients may manage their own administration of several different categories of medications, such as chemotherapy, total parenteral nutrition, Flolan for pulmonary hypertension, and narcotic medications for pain (Patient Controlled Analgesia, or PCA). These patients and/or their care providers are generally very knowledgeable about the management of their medication pump, and as such should be the sole person managing the pump.

All Levels

- 1) No attempt should be made to adjust or change the infusion device.
- 2) Document medication on patient care report, including dose and route if known. This is also applicable to non-intravenous medication infusions (e.g. insulin pumps, intrathecal infusions).

EMT-Basic

- 1) EMT- Basics may treat and transport patients on patient-administered IV medication, assuming they do not otherwise meet ALS criteria (based on chief complaint, vital signs, etc).

EMT-Paramedic

- 1) Provide routine paramedic care as indicated. If intravenous therapy is indicated, a separate peripheral IV should be established.
- 2) In the event a patient on continuous **Flolan (epoprostenol)** infusion is disconnected from their intravenous access site and is unable to re-connect the infusion, the paramedic should initiate peripheral intravenous access and connect the Flolan infusion directly to the peripheral intravenous line. Do not use an extension set or saline flush.
- 3) Contact medical oversight before re-establishing any other intravenous medications, or with any questions regarding patient administered medication.

Flolan (epoprostenol) is a potent vasodilator used in the management of patients with pulmonary hypertension. Given the brief half-life of the medication (3-5 minutes), loss of access for patients on Flolan should be considered an emergency. Flolan is also incompatible with saline, and should only be administered using the patient's own administration set.

