

# My Intrathecal Pump

Your therapy requires prescription medication be delivered directly to the intrathecal space in your spine via a surgically implanted infusion pump and catheter. Once this system is implanted, device complications may occur. The pump's rate of failure increases with the use of unapproved drugs. If you have any questions concerning your prescription, please contact your doctor. If your pump is equipped with alarms, your nurse will review these with you and instruct you on how to contact your doctor or nurse for treatment. Your nurse will also inform you of the side effects of your prescription medications as well as what to do in the event of an under dose or overdose.

**Please talk to your doctor to fully discuss the risks and benefits of your therapy.**

## General Activity Precautions for Intrathecal Pumps\*

- **Avoid activities requiring excessive twisting or stretching, as these will put undue stress on the implanted components of your infusion system.** Activities that include sudden, excessive, or repetitive bending, twisting, bouncing, or stretching can damage the components or cause the catheter to dislodge, which may require surgery to correct. The catheter could also become kinked or blocked which may prevent drug delivery and lead to serious injury or death.
- **Discuss effects of low pressure with your doctor before engaging in activities at high altitude including airline flights, skiing, or hiking.** Patients who live or travel at high altitude are exposed to lower air pressures, which may increase the flow rate of the pump. If your doctor determines that such an increase in flow rate might pose an undue risk to you, he or she can adjust your infusion prescription to offset the higher flow rate. (In rare cases, exposure to lower pressures can cause the flow rate of the SynchroMed II pump to exceed the programmed flow rate by more than 14.5%. The infusion prescription in these pumps can be changed for patients who will be exposed to lower pressure.)
- **Avoid exposure to excessively high temperatures.** If the temperature of a hot tub, steam room, sauna, or tanning bed is greater than 39°C (102°F), you should not use it. The flow rate of the pump will increase as body temperature increases. If the increase is significant, the pump can deliver too much medication, which may lead to serious injury or death.
- **Avoid activities involving exposure to high pressure.** Do not dive below 10 meters (33 feet) of water or enter hyperbaric chambers above 2.0 atmospheres absolute (ATA), as these pressures could damage the pump and require surgery to correct. To minimize damage when hyperbaric treatment is required, your doctor should fill the pump to capacity using the appropriate refill kit and maintain the current infusion prescription prior to exposure to hyperbaric conditions. Before diving or using a hyperbaric chamber, discuss the effects with your doctor. As pressure increases, pump flow decreases. Continuing to increase the pressure will eventually lead to serious injury or death.
- **Do not manipulate or rub the pump or catheter through the skin.** This is sometimes called "Twiddler's Syndrome". Manipulation can cause skin erosion, component damage, catheter disconnection, kinking, or dislodgement. Damage to the components of your infusion system can require surgery to correct. Catheter disconnection and kinking can result in drug or spinal fluid leakage into tissue and tissue damage, or a loss of or change in therapy that can lead to serious injury or death. Manipulation may also cause the pump to flip over, making it impossible to refill.

**\*Always refer to your pump manufacturer for specific guidelines for your type of intrathecal pump.**