
Continuous Narcotic and Sedative Usage in the ICU

Purpose:

To provide guidelines for nurses administering continuous narcotics and sedatives to critically ill patients in the ICU.

Policy:

1. The nurse shall note the physicians order for continuous narcotics and/or sedation.
2. The nurse shall obtain sedative and/or narcotic from pharmacy's automated dispensing system. The same nurse shall mix, hang, and document narcotic and/or sedative.
3. The nurse shall mix the continuous infusion using standard concentration. If the physician wants a different concentration other than the standardized form, an order shall be written as to how the concentration is to be made.
4. The nurse shall dispense the volume of the bag where the narcotic/sedative are mixed into a Buretrol ready for continuous infusion.
 - a. If the patient is a child or infant a syringe can be used to mix the infusion. Once infusion mixed it shall be placed on an auto – syringe to administer.
5. The Buretrol is then placed on a controlled rate IV pump.
6. Nurse documents administration of continuous infusion.
7. Nurse documents on flows sheet any change in rate or stoppage of continuous infusion
8. Pain and sedation shall be assessed every 4 hours during infusion.
9. Upon completion of continuous infusion 2 nurses shall waste and document wastage in the automated dispensing system.
10. Also refer to Hospital Policy 8.13 Control of Medications and Nursing Policy P – 15 Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) Pump.
11. Propofol is not to be pushed nor administered via continuous infusion to the non – ventilated patient.

Procedure:

RN

1. Assess patient for need of continuous sedation or pain medication.
2. Discuss with physician regarding initiation of continuous infusion.
3. Notes and sends order for sedation and/or narcotic to pharmacy.
4. Mixes infusion according to standard concentration.
5. Document patient's name, drug, admixture volume, date, time and nurses initials on label and label placed on infusion.
6. Spikes infusion and prepares tubing.
7. Dispenses infusion volume into Buretrol in – line with controlled rate IV pump tubing.
8. Sets controlled IV pump to desired rate to give prescribed dosage
9. Nurse documents administration of continuous infusion.
 - a. Nurses shall document in MAK in units where MAK is used.
 - b. Nurses shall document on the ICU flow sheet in units where MAK is not used. May do one of the following options:
 - i. In the STAT & One – Time Meds, the nurse shall add Continuous Narcotics in the heading (STAT & ONE – TIME MEDS/Continuous Narcotics). In section the nurse shall document time, medication, concentration, and initials
 - ii. In the PRN medication section the medication and concentration may be written in the first section then the nurse will time and initial when each new bag is hung.

10. Nurse documents on flow sheet any change in rate or stoppage of continuous infusion.
11. Reassess sedation and pain level every 4 hours.
12. Performs daily awakening trials as per unit specific policy.
13. Upon completion of continuous infusion 2 nurses shall waste and document wastage in the automated dispensing system.
14. Educates patient/family regarding sedation and analgesia.

MD

1. Assesses need for continuous sedation and/or pain medication.
2. Orders continuous sedation and or pain medication.
3. Orders any change in sedation or pain medication.

Pharmacist

1. Receives order for continuous sedation and/or narcotic.
2. Enters order into pharmacy computer system in a timely manner.

****See Standard Concentration Policy****

References:

1. Chulay, M., Burns, S (2006). AACN Essentials of Critical Care.
2. Alspach, J. (2006). Core Curriculum for Critical Care Nursing (6th ed).