

(Oakes, 2011).



FIG 5-7 Nurse programming a patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) pump to administer analgesia.

PCA infusion devices typically allow for three methods or modes of drug administration to be used alone or in combination:

1. Patient-administered boluses that can be infused only according to the preset amount and lockout interval (time between doses). More frequent attempts at self-administration may mean the patient needs the dose and time adjusted for better pain control.
2. Nurse-administered boluses that are typically used to give an initial loading dose to increase blood levels rapidly and to relieve breakthrough pain (pain not relieved with the usual programmed dose).
3. Continuous basal rate infusion that delivers a constant amount of analgesic and prevents pain from returning during those times,