

Backache

- Low back pain is very common after having a baby if you have had spinal or an epidural for delivery. Contact us if you have severe back pain near the site of your epidural or spinal injection and:
- The pain is getting worse and is not settling with simple pain killers (Ibuprofen/Paracetamol) or changing your position.
- The pain travels up the spine or down into the buttocks and legs.
- If the back feels hot or the area is red or oozing.
- You have a temperature and are feeling unwell.
- You lose control of your bladder or bowels.
- You have any changes in sensation in the lower body as listed below.

Sensation Change in lower body

- Nerve damage after childbirth (from an obstetric or anaesthetic cause) can occur in up to 1 in 100 women and is usually caused by pressure in the nerves in your pelvis during labour or delivery. Nerve damage due to anaesthesia is a rare complication of spinal or epidural injections. Nerve damage is usually temporary(1 in 1000 women). Permanent nerve damage resulting in paralysis (loss of the use of one or more limbs) is extremely rare(1 in 13000 women). This can cause an altered sensation in your buttocks or legs.
- Please Contact us if you feel any changes in your buttock or legs such as:
- Difficulty walking or weakness in the legs
- Numbness
- Pins and needles.

PLEASE GET IN TOUCH BY PHONING MAMAS LINE 0300 013 2004/Anaesthetic Department at 03006153195 at Wexham Park Hospital /03006134161 at Frimley Park Hospital and they can arrange for you to be assessed if necessary.

For a translation of this leaflet or for accessing this information in another format:

Large Print



Please contact (PALS) the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on:

Frimley Park Hospital

Telephone: 0300 613 6530
Email: fhft.palsfrimleypark@nhs.net

Wexham Park & Heatherwood Hospitals

Telephone: 0300 615 3365
Email: fhft.palswexhampark@nhs.net

Frimley Park Hospital

Portsmouth Road, Frimley, Surrey, GU16 7UJ

Heatherwood Hospital

Brook Avenue, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 7GB

Wexham Park Hospital

Wexham, Slough, Berkshire, SL2 4HL

Hospital switchboard: 0300 614 5000

Website: www.fhft.nhs.uk

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Legal Notice

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible. Please therefore always check specific advice or any concerns you may have with your doctor.

**Wexham Park Hospital
Maternity**

NHS
Frimley Health
NHS Foundation Trust

Discharge information after Epidural or Spinal Anaesthetic



**Information for patients,
relatives and carers**

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Introduction

You have been given this leaflet because you received an epidural or spinal anaesthetic, either for pain relief during labour, or for anaesthetic in the operating theatre.

The aim of this leaflet is to alert you to the symptoms to look out for in the days and weeks following your discharge from hospital that may indicate that you have a complication from the procedure, and to provide you with our contact details to arrange for you to be assessed if required. The information below applies to both epidural and spinal procedures.

The anaesthetist will have discussed the possible complications of epidural pain relief or spinal anaesthesia prior to the procedure. Complications such as headache may occur in up to 1 in 100 cases and may need to be assessed by a medical professional. More serious complications such as bleeding or infection are rare (ranging from 1 in 50 000 to 1 in 200 000) but need to be diagnosed early for prompt treatment to be initiated.

Assessment after removal of epidural catheter or after spinal

In the hours after an epidural or spinal anaesthetic injection, the midwife will check to ensure that you do not have any residual numbness or weakness of your legs from the action of the drugs used. They will ask you to move your legs and examine you to make sure that the sensation in your legs has returned to normal. It is important to remember that some deliveries or operations can cause altered sensation in the legs and so any changes experienced may be as a result of this and not the epidural or spinal anaesthetic injection. If you do have altered sensation your team will discuss this with you.

Headache

It is common to experience headache after giving birth. This can be due to a combination of tiredness, dehydration and disruption to normal eating patterns. However, after an epidural or spinal injection, there is up to a 1 in 100 risk of developing what is known as a 'post-dural puncture headache' (PDPH).

PDPH usually develops within a few days of the spinal or epidural procedure but may take up to a week to appear. It is most commonly experienced over the forehead and/or back of the head. It is worse when standing, sitting or straining and better when lying down flat. You may also experience nausea, neck pain and a dislike of bright lights.

What should I do if I develop this kind of headache?

If your headache develops while you are still in hospital, alert your midwife so that you can be assessed and advised by one of the anaesthetists during your stay. If the headache occurs after you have gone home, you should drink plenty of water (some patients find tea and coffee helpful), take regular paracetamol (4 times a day) and ibuprofen (3 times a day) and try to rest as much as possible. This is often sufficient, and the headache subsides within a few days. If you are still having visits at home from your midwife, discuss your symptoms with them.

However, if the headache persists or gets worse, we may advise a specialist treatment called an epidural blood patch which will need to take place in the hospital. If you feel that this is the case, please contact us via the MAMAS Line phone number given at the end of this leaflet so that we can arrange assessment and treatment if necessary.