

Patient information factsheet

Addressograph

After your epidural

This factsheet explains what to expect after your epidural (an injection in your back to stop you feeling pain in part of your body). If you have any further questions, please speak to a member of your healthcare team who will be pleased to help you.

Your epidural catheter was removed on:

Date: Time:.....

The epidural is given through a plastic tube (known as a catheter) in your back. The catheter will stay in place throughout your treatment. We will not be able to send you home until at least six hours after we have removed the catheter. Before you go home, we will make sure that you have passed urine and that the feeling and movement in your legs is back to normal. Please check with your nurse to see if you're able to shower when you go home.

Symptoms to look out for

Complications after an epidural are rare (less than 1 in 25,000), but if they do occur, it's important to spot them early so that we can prevent permanent damage.

If you have any of the symptoms below in the days or weeks after your epidural, contact your GP urgently or go to your nearest emergency department.

- Ongoing redness or swelling around the area where the epidural was removed (minor swelling is common in the first few days).
- Ongoing high temperature, sweats or shakes (fever).
- Any leakage (discharge) from the area where the epidural was removed.
- A headache that gets worse when sitting or standing and improves when lying flat. This may also cause sickness, sensitivity to light or hearing problems.
- Severe pain around the area where the epidural was removed.
- Any unusual feelings in legs and/or arms, such as numbness, tingling or weakness.
- Changes in bladder and/or bowel control (incontinence) that were not experienced before having the epidural.

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Tell your GP or the staff in the emergency department that you have recently had an epidural and the date it was removed.

Useful links

For more information, you may find the website below useful.

Royal College of Anaesthetists: www.rcoa.ac.uk

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