

Pain Management Team



Epidural – Discharge Advice for Patients

The epidural catheter (tube) has now been removed from your back. Rarely, complications can occur after an epidural is removed. We will continue to observe you during your admission. Please tell the nurse looking after you if you have any pain or any change in the feeling or strength in your legs.

Infections

The area where the epidural catheter was inserted should be kept clean and dry. Rarely, an infection can develop at the site of the insertion. An infection can develop on the surface under the skin or, more deeply, close to the spinal cord and major nerves. This could be an abscess (a collection of pus) or meningitis.

Please remember that these infections are very rare but would require urgent treatment with antibiotics and/or surgery to prevent permanent nerve injury. Early symptoms of infection are heat, pain and swelling – please tell the nurse looking after you in hospital if you think any of these are occurring.

Haematomas

There is a very small chance that you could develop a collection of blood which is known as an epidural haematoma. This haematoma may press on the spinal cord or a nerve and cause damage. Occasionally, an urgent operation is required to remove the haematoma and relieve the pressure on the spinal cord or nerve to prevent permanent damage. This is very rare.

Things to look out for at home

Once you have gone home, it is important that you or your carers continue to look out for any symptoms that could suggest a complication of your epidural is developing.

These are:

- Redness and/or swelling around the site where the epidural catheter was inserted. It is normal for the site to have some minor redness and/or swelling for the first few days but this should disappear. You should only be concerned if the redness and/or swelling persists.
- Pus – a discharge may develop from the insertion site.
- Fever (temperature, sweats, shakes).
- New, severe back pain near the site of the epidural.
- Changes in the feeling and/or strength in your legs.
- Difficulty in passing urine that you did not have before you epidural was inserted.

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If you experience any of the above:

- Go to your GP **urgently** or
- Go to your nearest A&E (Accident and Emergency) department or
- Contact the Acute Pain Team on 01603 286286

Take this leaflet with you and tell the doctor that you have recently had an epidural.

Useful websites:

www.patient.co.uk

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/epidural/>



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The organisation responsible for the standards in anaesthesia, critical care and pain management throughout the UK.

