



Information for patients  
and carers

# Post epidural infusion discharge advice

## Introduction

You have been given this leaflet because you have received an epidural infusion as part of your pain management plan following your operation. The anaesthetist will have discussed the possible complications of epidurals prior to insertion. Serious complications from epidural analgesia are rare (1 in 5,800 - 1 in 12,000). As the epidural space is close to the spinal cord, a collection of pus or a blood clot can cause pressure on the spinal cord. In the unlikely event that there is pressure on the spinal cord it is crucial to diagnose and treat it as quickly as possible. This must be done by specialist doctors to prevent delays in treatment and long lasting damage. This leaflet tells you what to look for and what action to take if you think that you have a problem.

## Assessment before removal of epidural catheter

Whilst you are an inpatient the inpatient pain nurses will see you regularly to check that the epidural is working effectively and that your legs are not too numb or weak. The inpatient pain nurses and the ward nurses will also check your back to make sure that the epidural insertion site is not red or sore.

## Assessment after removal of epidural catheter

When the epidural is removed the team of ward nurses and doctors will check to ensure that you do not have any residual numbness or weakness in your legs from the action of the drugs in the epidural infusion. They will ask you to move your legs and examine you to make sure that the sensation in your legs is as it was before the operation. It is important to remember that some operations can cause altered sensation in the legs; therefore any changes experienced may be as a result of the surgery and not the epidural. If you do have altered sensation when the epidural is removed your team will discuss this with you.

The ward nurses will also continue to check the epidural insertion site for any signs of infection such as redness, pain, heat and swelling. If you experience any of the signs or symptoms listed below whilst still an inpatient please inform your ward team immediately.

**When you go home it is important that you and your carers continue to look out for any of the following signs or symptoms which could suggest a complication with your epidural site:**

- Redness, pus, tenderness or pain at the epidural wound site
  - Feeling generally unwell despite the fact that all seems to be well with the surgical wound
  - High temperature, neck stiffness, headache
  - Numbness and /or weakness in your legs/inability to weight bear
  - Difficulty passing water/controlling bowel movements
- 
-

**If you become aware of any of the above, please go to your nearest Emergency Department and inform them that you have recently had an epidural catheter. Take this leaflet with you.**

## **Contact details**

If you have any concerns about your epidural site please contact the ward where you were discharged from, or the inpatient pain team on 01772 522436 (Monday – Friday 0800 - 17:00).

## **Sources of further information**

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.rcoa.ac.uk](http://www.rcoa.ac.uk)

**Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.**

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

---

---

## Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site

On 31 May 2017 Lancashire Teaching Hospitals became a smoke-free organisation. From that date smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking including Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal.

If you want to stop smoking you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

### Cantonese:

如果你希望以另外一種格式接收該資訊，請和我們聯絡，不必猶豫。

### Gujarati:

જો તમને આ માહિતી બીજી રચના કે ફોર્મેટમાં મેળવવાની ઈચ્છા હોય, તો કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક કરતા અચકાશો નહિ.

### Hungarian:

Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot, ha más formában kéri ezt az információt.

### Polish:

Jeżeli chciał(a)by Pan/Pani otrzymać niniejsze informacje w innym formacie, prosimy o kontakt.

### Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾ ਝਿਜਕੋ।

### Urdu:

اگر آپ اس معلومات کو کسی اور صورت میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کرنے میں ہچکچاہٹ محسوس نہ کریں۔

**Department:** Anaesthetics

**Division:** Diagnostics and Clinical Support

**Production date:** September 2019

**Review date:** September 2022

JR 187 v1

