

## Going home after having an epidural or spinal anaesthetic

The anaesthetic team always aims to review you before you are sent home to make sure that you have recovered from your spinal or epidural. Sometimes you can be discharged before we can see you.

Although it is extremely rare, it is possible to have complications from your spinal or epidural. Severe problems can be avoided if we can detect them early. The problems are likely to be detected whilst you are still in hospital but very occasionally they can appear when you are at home up to six weeks later. The information below will help you to identify some symptoms which may have been caused by your spinal or epidural.

### Headache

Contact us if your headache:

- Limits your ability to look after yourself or your baby.
- Does not go away after you have rested, drunk fluids and taken mild pain killers such as paracetamol.
- Gets worse while you are sitting or standing but feels better when you are lying down.
- Comes with other symptoms like neck stiffness or hearing changes (such as ringing or a blocked sensation) or a dislike of bright lights.
- Is associated with any other symptom listed below.

### Backache

Low back pain is very common after having a baby. 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 settled with simple pain killers or adjusting 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 changed sensation in the lower body as listed below.

### Changed sensation in lower body

Nerve damage after childbirth 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. This can cause an altered sensation in your buttocks or legs.

Nerve damage caused by a spinal or epidural is very rare. 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.

**If any concerns above contact maternity triage on 01392 406616**