

Recovery from a Spinal or Epidural

This information will help you to identify symptoms which could be related to your spinal or epidural.

The anaesthetic team may review you before you go home to make sure that you have recovered from your spinal or epidural.



Complications are thankfully rare and are usually detected while you are in hospital. If everything is fine, you may be discharged home without seeing the anaesthetic team again.

Severe Headache

Epidural

1 in every 100 women*

Spinal

1 in every 100 - 200 women*

*subject to individual unit variation



Headache

Contact us if your headache is associated with any other symptom listed below:



Limits your ability to look after yourself or your baby



Does not go away after you have rested, drunk fluids and taken paracetamol



Gets worse while you are upright but feels better when you lie down



Comes with other symptoms like neck stiffness, hearing changes (such as ringing or a blocked sensation) or a dislike of bright lights

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

Contact us if your headache is associated with any other symptom listed below:



The pain is getting worse or is not settling with paracetamol or ibuprofen



The pain travels up the spine or down into the buttocks and legs



Your back feels hot or the area is red or oozing



You have a fever and are feeling unwell



You lose control of your bladder or bowels



You have any changed sensation in the lower body as listed below

Altered sensation in lower body



Up to 1 in 100 women experience nerve damage after childbirth

This is usually caused by pressure on nerves in your pelvis during labour or delivery and can cause an altered sensation in your buttocks or legs.

By comparison, nerve damage caused by a spinal or epidural is very rare but causes similar sensations.

Contact us if you feel any changes in your buttocks or legs such as:



Difficulty walking or weakness in the legs



Numbness



Pins and needles

Contact us

If you have any concerns while you are still in hospital please ask your midwife to contact the obstetric anaesthetist on duty before you go home.

If you are at home, then please contact: