Signs to look out for after an epidural for pain relief

Information for patients
Signs to look out for after an epidural for pain relief

You have had an epidural injection into your back to provide pain relief.

The epidural injection was performed on ...........................................................

Serious complications from epidural analgesia (pain relief) are rare, affecting only 1 in 10,000 people. The epidural space is close to the spinal cord. A collection of pus or a blood clot in this space can cause pressure on the spinal cord. In the unlikely event that there is pressure on the spinal cord it is very important to diagnose and treat it as quickly as possible. This must be done by expert hospital doctors to prevent delays in treatment and long lasting damage. This leaflet tells you what to look out for and what action to take if you think that you have a problem.

It is very unusual for anyone to have problems after having an epidural. However, if you experience any of the signs and symptoms listed below as a new problem in the next month, you should seek urgent medical advice from the nearest Accident and Emergency department:

- new or worsening back pain
- high temperature and neck stiffness
- numbness, weakness or any change in sensation in your legs
- any inability to pass urine or control your bowels
- a new or different headache which is worse when sitting or standing up
- redness, tenderness and discharge from the epidural site on your back.

If you experience any of these symptoms, please take this information leaflet with you to the Accident and Emergency department as the doctors will need to know when you had your epidural.
For non-urgent advice please contact:

**Pain Relief Unit – Nurse Advice**

Voicemail: **01865 857 107**

or

Email: **painreliefteam.ouh@nhs.net**

**Please note:**

For appointment queries contact **01865 572 079**
If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call 01865 221 473 or email PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk