

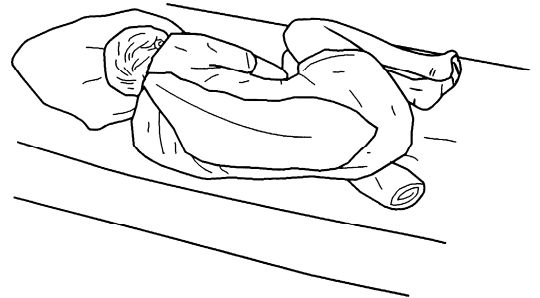
Epidural Pain Relief for Labor and Delivery

An epidural is often used for pain relief during labor and delivery. A small flexible tube is put in the lower back. Medicine is injected into the tube to provide pain relief in the lower abdomen, legs and birth canal. A special doctor called an anesthesiologist will place the tube in your back.

How is the procedure done?

- Your nurse will help you stay in the position while the tube is being put in.

- ▶ You may be asked to lie on your left side and bring your knees up to your stomach as far as you can. Arch your lower back. A roll will be put under your left hip.



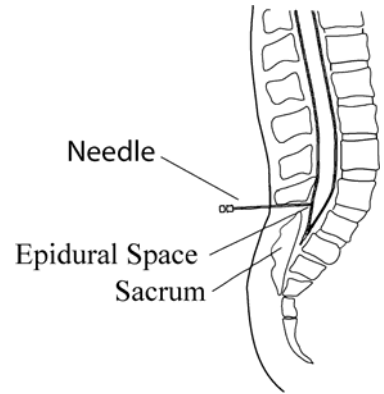
or

- ▶ You may be asked to sit on the side of your bed and lean over a table to round your back.

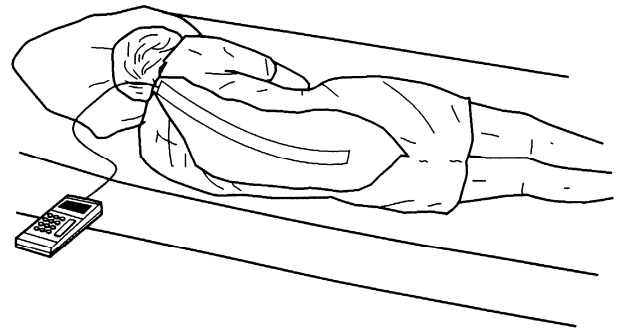


- The doctor cleans your lower back.
- A numbing medicine is injected into the lower back. You may feel a sting or burning.
- The staff will ask you to put your chin to your chest and push your back out.

- The doctor puts a needle into the numbed area and positions the tube into the epidural space around your spinal cord.
- Breathe slowly and deeply. Relax and **do not move**. (If you have a contraction, use breathing and relaxation techniques.)



- The needle is removed and the soft tube will stay in your back. Tape will hold it in place.



Possible Side Effects

- Pain relief may vary. Most women get good pain relief from an epidural.
- You will be able to move your legs. Your legs may feel slightly numb or weak, especially if you receive a stronger dose of medicine. You will be asked to stay in bed for your safety.
- An epidural may slow or speed up labor. The amount of medicine can be changed as needed to make sure you stay comfortable or if you or your doctor wants you to be able to push more.
- On rare occasions, there is the possible side effect of a headache after delivery.

When Not to Have an Epidural

If you have or think you may have any of these conditions, tell your doctor or nurse.

- Bleeding problems

- Infection in the lower back area
- Previous lower back surgery
- Blood pressure problems
- Nerve problems
- Drug abuse

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

2007 – 6/2012 Health Information Translations

Unless otherwise stated, user may print or download information from www.healthinfotranslations.org for personal, non-commercial use only. The medical information found on this website should not be used in place of a consultation with your doctor or other health care provider. You should always seek the advice of your doctor or other qualified health care provider before you start or stop any treatment or with any questions you may have about a medical condition. The Ohio State University Medical Center, Mount Carmel Health System, OhioHealth and Nationwide Children's Hospital are not responsible for injuries or damages you may incur as a result of your stopping medical treatment or your failure to obtain medical treatment.