

my birth

epidural

What is an epidural?

An epidural is a numbing medicine that's injected directly into the spine.

Research shows

- Epidurals are not harmful for your baby.
- Epidurals do not increase your chance of needing a C-section.
- Epidurals give better pain relief for labor and birth than pills or injections.

Advantages

- You will feel less pain during labor.
- You may still be able to feel painless contractions.
- If you need a C-section to birth your baby, the epidural may be used, so you are awake for the birth of your baby.

Side effects

You may feel light-headed, shivery, or sick to your stomach.

The epidural may take away your urge to urinate, requiring use of a tube to drain your bladder.

You will stay in bed as your legs may feel heavy and numb.

The epidural may not always provide total pain relief, and in some cases the epidural will need to be replaced.

An epidural can sometimes make your labor longer and may increase the need to use a vacuum or forceps to help your baby's birth.

It may make pushing harder since the epidural can dampen the urge to push.

Very rarely, people will develop a severe headache from the epidural. This can be treated.

What to expect with your epidural

- 1. IV insertion** An IV is put in your hand or arm.
- 2. Get into position** We help you into position, on your side or sitting up.
- 3. Clean the skin** Your lower back is cleaned with antiseptic.
- 4. Local anesthetic** Local anesthetic is injected into your back. This numbs the skin.
- 5. Epidural insertion** You will feel a pushing sensation in your back as the epidural is inserted. We will help you keep perfectly still to avoid any damage to the nerves in your spine. You may feel a quick, harmless, electric shock in your back and legs.
- 6. Epidural in place** The needle is removed from your back and the epidural catheter is taped into place to prevent it from coming out. Once anesthetic is given, it starts working in 30 minutes.

