



# After your Epidural or Spinal Block

For most women there are no problems following their epidural. However, it is important to acknowledge that occasionally there are times when complications can occur after having an epidural, spinal block or combination of both. If you are unsure, it is essential that you **URGENTLY** report any concerns to staff at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women (KEMH) or your general practitioner (GP), informing them of your recent epidural or spinal block.

## You need to contact us promptly when you experience any of the following:

- ▶ Your back pain is getting worse rather than better.
- ▶ Any redness or swelling develops around the site where the needle was put into your back.
- ▶ Any discharge or pus in the area where the spinal needle was put into your back.
- ▶ Any change in sensation, numbness or pins and needles in your legs or feet that you did not notice while you were in hospital.
- ▶ Any backache, headache or neck stiffness that is:
  - accompanied by a fever,
  - worse when you sit or stand up, or
  - does not go away.

## Other important things to remember are:

- ▶ It is well known that some women experience back pain throughout their pregnancy or after having a baby.
- ▶ Pain related to an epidural or spinal block is different as it comes from the place where the needle is put into the back.
- ▶ A small amount of tenderness is expected in this area but it should not interfere with your normal activity.
- ▶ Most women feel like they have a bruise at the spot where the spinal needle went in.
- ▶ If at any time you feel the pain is becoming worse, you should contact KEMH as soon as possible.

## Contact details

If you have any concerns about your epidural or spinal block, call the Department of Anaesthesia and Pain Medicine at KEMH on (08) 6458 2222 and ask for pager number 3225, available 24 hours.



**Women and Newborn Health Service**  
King Edward Memorial Hospital  
374 Bagot Road, Subiaco WA 6008  
Telephone: (08) 6458 2727  
[www.wnhs.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.wnhs.health.wa.gov.au)

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

Produced by: Department of Anaesthesia and Pain Medicine  
© North Metropolitan Health Service - Jan 2018