

*If you have questions or concerns, please talk with your physician or nurse.*

## Epidural Analgesia

Good pain management is an important part of your care. Epidural analgesia is a safe and effective way to manage pain. It is anesthesia injected into your epidural space. Often, care teams will use it during and after surgery to manage pain at a specific site. Regional (epidural) anesthesia lessens many of the side effects common with general anesthesia.

Many people who get epidural analgesia:

- Recover faster and feel less drowsy after their surgery.
- Have pain that is well managed.
- Are less likely to have nausea and vomiting.

This brochure describes regional epidural anesthesia. Carefully follow any other instructions your physician or nurse give you.

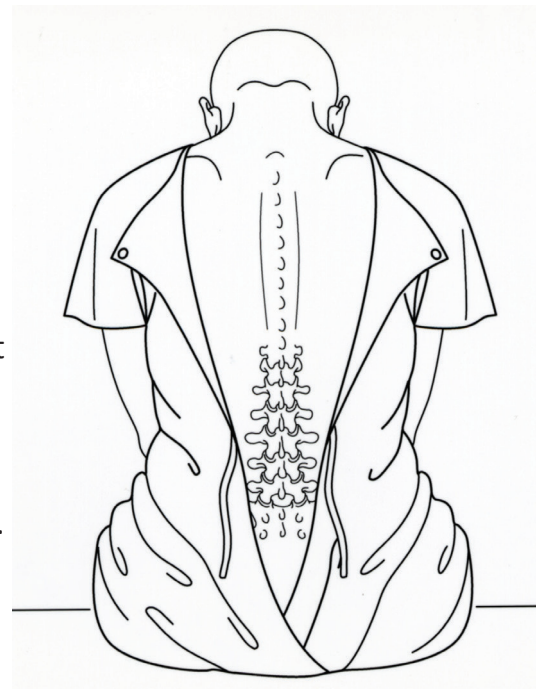
## Anesthesia plan

The goal of anesthesia is to keep you comfortable and manage your pain. As a patient, you have a right to pain management.

For surgery, epidural anesthesia is often part of a 2-step process:

- Epidural anesthesia to prevent pain during surgery.
- Sedation or light general anesthesia to ensure that you are asleep and unaware of what is going on around you during surgery.

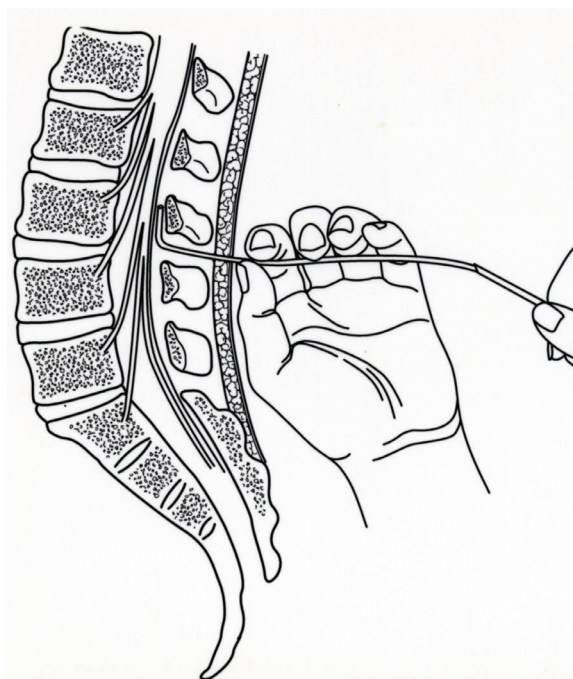
Before surgery, the care team will put an IV (into the vein) catheter (small plastic tube) in your arm or hand. They will inject medication into the IV to relax you. Once you are relaxed, they will give you the epidural or epidural/spinal anesthesia.



## Procedure

The care team will put a catheter in the epidural space. This space is around the spinal cord in your lower back. The catheter does not go near the spinal cord. It is outside of the membrane covering the spinal cord.

The care team will give you numbing medication (local anesthetic) and a narcotic pain medication through this catheter. The medication spreads to your nerves to lessen pain. Depending on your surgery, you may be numb from your waist to your toes. You will not be able to move your legs while you get the medication.



## Pain management

Once the epidural catheter is in place, your care team will use it for either chronic or post-surgery pain management. You will get a small dose of numbing medicine and narcotic pain medicine continuously through a pump. The smaller doses let you move your legs without pain.

You can give yourself more medication with the pump by pushing a hand-held button. The pump will only give you a safe amount of medication. This button is only for you to use.

Family members or visitors should never press the button without your consent. When someone other than you presses the button, they may put you at risk of getting medication you do not need.

Most people who use epidural analgesia have:

- More pain-free movement
- Fewer problems due to bed rest
- Longer-lasting pain relief
- Fewer medication side effects

Epidural analgesia may cause some side effects. Your care team can give you medication to manage these side effects. Please tell your physician or nurse if you have:

- Problems urinating
- More pain
- Nausea
- Itching
- Numbness in your legs, or weakness in moving your legs or feet

If the epidural does not manage your pain, the care team can easily stop it. They may use an IV or oral pain medication instead. Usually, once you can eat, the care team will take out the epidural catheter. Then, you can take pills for pain relief.

Please tell your physician or nurse if you are in pain or if you have any other questions or concerns.