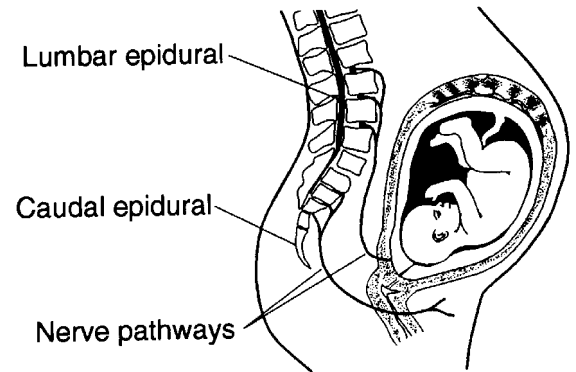


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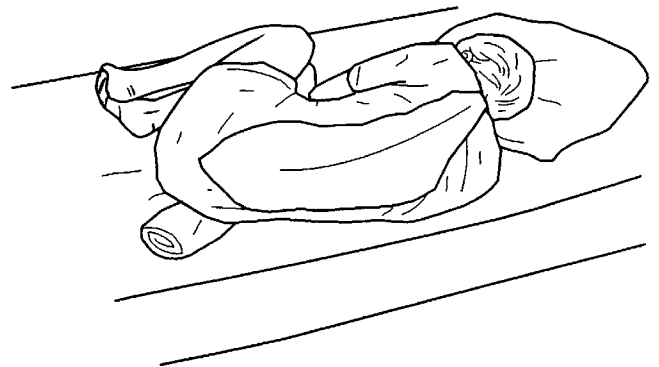
Epidural Anesthesia Pain Relief for Labor and Delivery

The epidural block is the most commonly used form of local anesthesia for delivery. Medicine is injected through a small flexible tube put into the lower back that provides pain-relief in the lower abdomen, legs and birth canal. It is also used to relieve pain during a Cesarean delivery. Once you and your obstetrician, family practitioner, or certified nurse midwife feel that your labor is progressing appropriately, the anesthesiologist or certified nurse anesthetist will place the epidural.



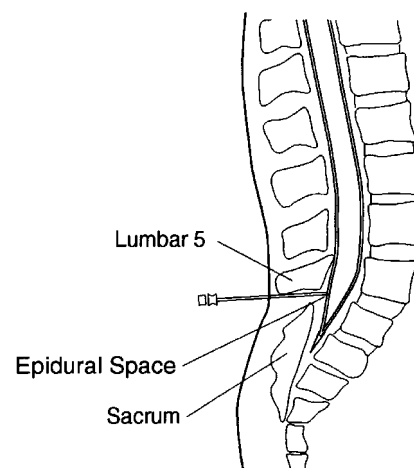
How is the Procedure Done?

- One of two positions is used to open up the space in your lower back where the tube is placed. Your nurse will help you stay in the position during the procedure.
 - ▶ You may be asked to lie on your left side and bring your knees up to your stomach as far as possible. Arch your lower back. A roll will be put under your right hip to displace the uterus to the left. This position will result in a good blood flow to the uterus for your baby.
 - ▶ You may be asked to sit on the side of your bed and lean over a table to round your back.

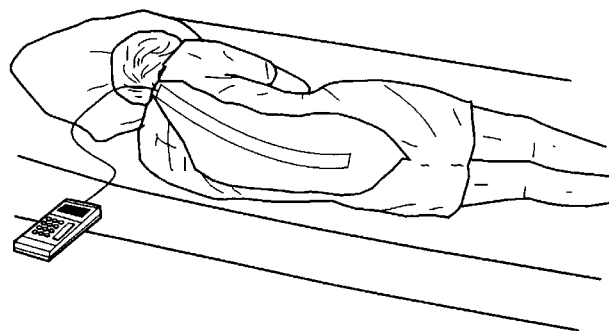


- The doctor will clean your lower back with an antibacterial soap. Then a numbing medicine will be injected into this area of the lower back.

- Next, the doctor will put a needle with a tube into this numbered area and position it into the epidural space. Breathe slowly and deeply. Try to relax and do not move. Use the breathing and relaxation techniques taught in the Childbirth Education Classes. The needle will be removed from your lower back and the thin flexible tube will remain in the epidural space.



- After the catheter is in, a small test dose is given. We will watch and check you for 5 - 15 minutes before the full dose is injected. Relief from the contractions and vaginal and rectal pain follows shortly. You will be able to move your legs, although they may feel slightly numb. You may be asked to remain in bed.



Possible Side Effects

- Pain relief may vary from total to no pain relief. About 85 out of 100 women get total relief of pain from the epidural block.
- A temporary drop in blood pressure may occur, which can be treated with IV fluids or medicine that can be given safely to you and your baby.
- Epidural anesthesia may slow labor if given too soon. At other times, it may result in labor that is more rapid than usual. In addition, the epidural may slow pushing efforts. The amount of epidural medicine can be increased or decreased as needed to correct this problem.
- On rare occasions when the spinal fluid is entered, there is the possible side effect of getting a headache after delivery.

Contraindications for the Use of Epidural Anesthesia

If you have or suspect you may have any of these conditions, you should let your healthcare provider know.

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| ▶ Bleeding problems | ▶ Blood pressure problems |
| ▶ Infection near the site of the needle insertion | ▶ Neurological disorders |
| ▶ Some types of previous lower back surgery | ▶ Drug abuse (cocaine, heroine) |

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- ▶ Upon request all patient education handouts are available in other formats for people with hearing, vision, and language problems, call (614) 293-3191. For more information, please call (614) 293-3707.