

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

Epidural Medicine for Pain

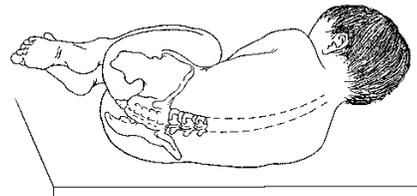
Why should we treat pain?

Normal bumps and bruises cause children pain. Pain tells us we have hurt ourselves, or we are sick. Pain tells us to protect ourselves from more injury, or tells us to get help.

Pain after surgery or a bad injury that is not treated can hurt us. The pain can make it hard to take a deep breath, hard to move, or hard to walk.

What is epidural pain treatment (analgesia)?

The spinal cord and spinal fluid are in the **spinal canal**. The **epidural space** is an area outside the spinal canal, where medicine can be placed. Another word for pain relief is **analgesia**. In **continuous epidural analgesia** a tiny, soft plastic tube (called a **catheter**) is put near the spine. Medicine is put into this tube to relieve pain. The doctor decides where to put the catheter on the spine based on the site of the pain your child has or will have after surgery.



In continuous epidural analgesia a tiny, soft plastic tube is put near the spine. Medicine goes into the epidural space.

What's special about epidural analgesia?

- It is safe and works well for infants and children.
- Because children with epidural anesthesia can be awake, they can do things that help them heal faster.
- It does not have many side effects.

- The child is more awake and can talk and play.
- Problems are very rare, but complications of epidural analgesia include nerve damage, infection, or bleeding.

When is epidural analgesia used?

The pain medicine may be put into the epidural space once, or be put in continuously through a catheter.

One time dose

The medicine may be given one time, during surgery. This is often done for children that may go home on the day of surgery. The medicine is given one time as an injection, not through a catheter.

Pump the pain medicine in as needed (continuous)

When the child may have pain that lasts for days, the tube is left in and the medicine is given continuously over time.

How is epidural pain treatment done?

If it is a one time dose, the medicine is given through a needle, and the needle is removed.

If the medicine is going to be given continuously, the doctor places a needle into the epidural space, and the tube (**catheter**) is placed through the needle. The needle is taken out, and the tube is left in place in the epidural space. The tube is taped in place on your child's back, and the medicine is put through the tube.

yes no **If your child gets an epidural treatment and stays in the hospital:**

- The nurse or doctor will cover the tube with a clear bandage. The tubing will be taped to your child's back or shoulder.
- The nurse will set a pump that gives your child pain medicine through the tube. The pump will give your child medicine regularly, to relieve the pain.

- Because epidural analgesia helps your child feel less pain, your child can sit in a chair or walk sooner after surgery and will feel better faster.
- The nurse will show you how to hold and cuddle your child safely, while the tube is in.
- Some children may have itchy skin or an upset stomach. If there is a problem, tell a member of your child's health care team.
- When your child no longer needs the medicine, the doctor will take out the tube. Your child may feel the tape being pulled off the skin, but taking out the tube will not hurt.



Your child can sit in a chair or walk sooner after surgery and will feel better faster.

yes no **If your child gets an epidural analgesia, then goes home:**

The medicine may make your child feel numb below the waist. Your child may not be able to feel his or her legs. This will wear off 4 to 6 hours after the medicine is given. This relieves your child's pain. However, there are several things you need to watch until your child can feel again:

• **Position**

Your child may not feel his or her lower body. Put your child's legs in a natural position, in line with the upper body. Do not let your child's legs touch one another, or rest on anything that could rub the skin or hurt them.

• **Temperature**

For 4 to 6 hours after the medicine is given, your child may not be able to feel the difference between hot and cold. Check the temperature of seat belts and car seats before you buckle your child in. Do not let buckles touch bare skin.

• **Moving around**

Your child may not be able to crawl or walk well until the medicine wears off.

- **Feeling comes back**

After several hours the medicine will wear off and your child's lower body will get feeling back. As the medicine wears off, your child may feel tingling. This is normal.

Tell your child's nurse or doctor if your child has:

- Upset stomach
- Throws up
- Itches
- Has trouble passing urine
- Breathes slowly
- Has trouble staying awake



Call the doctor if, by _____ o'clock, (8 hours after surgery):

- feeling or movement does not return to the lower body.
- your child has not passed urine.

Now that you've read this:

- Tell your child's nurse or doctor how you will care for your child until the medicine wears off. (Check when done.)
- Tell your child's nurse or doctor when you will call a member of the health care team. (Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,
 call your child's doctor or call _____

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
Facebook: facebook.com/theemilycenter
Twitter: @emilycenter
Pinterest: pinterest.com/emilycenter

Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

August 13, 2014 • DRAFT to family review
#241 • Written by Charlene Cowley, MS, RN, CPNP • Illustrated by Dennis Swain

Epidural Medicine for Pain

Name of Health Care Provider: _____

Date returned: _____ db

Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.

Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read? Yes No

easy to read? Yes No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read? Yes No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading
this handout? Yes No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any
questions about the subject? Yes No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes

No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

The Emily Center
Health Education Specialist
Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

602-933-1395

Thank you for helping us!