Caudal epidural

Information for patients
Pain Management Service
As part of your treatment it has been suggested that you may benefit from a caudal epidural. It is difficult to say how much this treatment may help your pain. This written information will try to answer some of your questions. It is impossible for this kind of leaflet to cover all the information about caudal epidurals that you may need or want. However, we hope that you will find it helps to remind you about things you have already been told.

If after reading this leaflet you are unclear about anything or would like more information please ask us when you come in for treatment, or contact the Pain Clinic between 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday to Friday on:

- 0114 271 5210
Do I need to stay overnight in hospital to have a caudal epidural?

Not usually, however, we ask everyone to bring an overnight bag in with them as we find people are more comfortable wearing their own nightwear, slippers and dressing gown. Plus, if you do need to be admitted, as can sometimes happen, then you also have everything you need.

Where is the epidural done?

The epidural is carried out in the X-ray department or in a small theatre in the Day Case Centre.

What is a caudal epidural?

A caudal epidural is an injection of any one of these drugs:

- Steroid
- Local anaesthetic
- Mixture of both

How will having a caudal epidural help me?

Sometimes the nerves in between the top of your buttocks at the lower part of your spine can become irritated and this can cause pain in your lower back and/or leg(s). Injecting these drugs bathes the affected nerves and may help to reduce irritation or pain.

Your doctor will explain the treatment in more detail before asking you to sign a consent form. Only sign the consent form if you are completely sure you understand the treatment you are having. If you are unsure of anything please ask someone to explain it again.
How is a caudal epidural performed?

You will be asked to sit or lie in a comfortable position and your skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution.

An epidural needle is then placed in position to allow the drugs to be injected. We will take your blood pressure and pulse throughout the treatment and for a short time afterwards.

Will it hurt?

There may be some discomfort involved. However, the doctor will numb the affected area by injecting a local anaesthetic.

What happens afterwards?

After you have had your epidural you will have a small dressing on your back, which you can remove the following day. Before allowing you home, we will check your pulse, blood pressure and breathing rate. When we feel that you have recovered from the procedure, we will give you something to eat and drink and then you will be able to go home.

What are the risks in having a caudal epidural?

Any treatments that involve injections near your spine may cause problems. The doctor will explain these to you before asking you to sign a consent form giving permission to carry out the treatment. There will also be the chance to discuss any other treatments that may be available.
Are there any side effects?

There may be some immediate side effects from this treatment. These include, from the local anaesthetic:

- Numb legs
- Difficulty passing urine
- Low blood pressure

These problems tend not to last long but we may sometimes decide it is better to admit you until the side effects have worn off. This would mean staying in hospital overnight. We would especially do this if the numbness affects your walking or you are unable to pass urine.

If your blood pressure were lowered then we would treat this by giving you extra fluids by a drip.

What should I look out for when I go home?

Headaches

The epidural itself may give you a severe headache. This usually disappears after 24 - 48 hours. Drinking lots of fluid, resting and using painkillers like Paracetemol will help. Very occasionally, if the headache is very severe, we admit patients overnight so that we can give them extra fluid in the form of a drip.

Infection

Anyone having an injection through the skin is at risk of infection. However, this is very rare. Signs of infection would include:

- Redness, heat and swelling around the injection site
- Raised temperature
- Unpleasant coloured discharge
- Increase in pain at the injection site
- Feeling generally unwell
• Increased numbness and difficulty walking
• Difficulty passing urine

**Increase in pain**

It is not unusual to feel uncomfortable or have an increase in your pain for 3 - 4 days after the treatment, but it will settle.

• Continue to take your painkillers as normal
• Apply heat/cold to the area if there are no signs of infection
• Try to keep as active as possible

**Who should I contact if I have any concerns?**

If you have any concerns please contact the Pain Clinic on:

• **0114 271 5210** (Monday to Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm)

or contact your GP.

**What happens when I go home?**

Please remember, you will need someone to collect you from the day case centre after the treatment, because you may feel unsteady on your feet. If you have had sedation you may also feel drowsy. For the first 24 hours after your treatment, we recommend that you:

• Do not drive
• Do not take public transport alone
• Do not drink alcohol
• You will also need someone to stay with you overnight.
• We also suggest that you take 24 - 48 hours off work.
• If you have **any concerns** please ring the Pain clinic on the above number during office hours, otherwise contact your GP.
What if I would like any further information?

This information can be used to remind you about things you have already been told. It does not mean you cannot ask further questions or ask for reassurance about anything that may be worrying you. We aim for you to be kept informed about your treatments and understand what they mean.