

Anesthesia Epidural Blood Patch

An epidural blood patch is used to relieve a certain type of headache. The headache is caused by

- A spinal anesthetic,
- Lumbar puncture (spinal tap),
- Myelogram.

Sometimes after the above procedures, spinal fluid leaks out. The spinal fluid pressure decreases. This low pressure can cause a headache. A low-pressure headache can cause severe pain when you stand or sit. The headache often gets better when lying flat. If your doctor believes you have a low-pressure headache, he or she may suggest an epidural blood patch.

An epidural blood patch places your own blood in the spinal space. It is placed close to the same site where your treatment was done. This blood forms a clot or “patch” over the area that is leaking.

What will be done during the blood patch?

1. You will be brought into a prep room where you will change into a gown and have an IV started.
2. The person from anesthesia will explain the treatment to you and answer any questions you have.
3. Before the treatment, let the staff know if you take any medicines to thin your blood. Also, tell them the last time you had anything to eat or drink.
4. You may be given drugs through your IV to help relax you.
5. You will be asked to sit up or lay on your side for this. Next, the person

from anesthesia will clean off your back with germ killing soap.

6. A medicine is used to numb your skin where the needle will go. This may sting, but after that you should not feel much at all.
7. The needle is then placed into your back where the other treatment was done.
8. A small amount of blood is drawn from your arm. It is injected right away through the epidural needle into your back. You may feel some minor pain or pressure in your back while it is being injected.
9. After resting for 1 hour, you will be sent home.
10. You will need someone to drive you home and no driving for 24 hours.

What should I do at home?

- Take it easy the rest of the day.
- Avoid any heavy lifting or intense activity for 24 hours.
- Watch for signs of infection.
 - Fever greater than 100.4° F by mouth
 - Increased redness or swelling around the blood patch site
 - Severe stiff neck
 - Problems thinking clearly

Who to Call

Call the paging operator at **(608) 262-0486 or 1-800-323-8942**. Ask for the doctor on call for the **Anesthesia Acute Pain Service**. Leave your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back. If you had the procedure at The American Center, ask for the TAC Anesthesiologist on-call. We wish you a quick recovery.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 10/2019. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#7017.