

Going home after an epidural or spinal anaesthetic

Severe complications from an epidural or spinal anaesthetic are very rare.

However, if you have any of the following symptoms, contact the hospital as soon as possible.

Headache

There are many reasons you might get a headache, but most headaches get better with rest, drinking fluids, and taking simple pain relief like paracetamol. Ask your nurse or midwife if you need any.

Contact the hospital if:

- your headache doesn't go away after rest, fluids, or simple pain relief
- your headache gets worse when sitting or standing but feels better when lying down
- you have other symptoms, like a stiff neck, changes in hearing (ringing or blocked ears), eye problems (sensitivity to light), fever, or chills.

Backache

It's common to feel tender or bruised on your back where the procedure was done. This can last for up to a week but shouldn't affect your from doing your normal activities. You can use simple pain relief if needed.

Spinal or epidural anaesthetics don't cause long-term back pain.

Contact the hospital if you notice any of the following:

- new or worsening back pain, for example, pain spreading up your spine or down into your buttocks and legs
- redness, swelling, or fluid leaking from where the needle was inserted
- you have a fever or chills.

Changes in feeling in your lower body

It's common to have numb areas after birth. This usually happens because the baby pressed on nerves in your pelvis during labour and delivery. In rare cases, the anaesthetic may cause numbness, but it usually goes away within weeks.

Contact the hospital if you feel any ongoing or new changes in your buttocks or legs such as:

- weakness
- numbness
- pins and needles.

For more information and advice

**Acute Pain Service,
The Royal Women's Hospital**

Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm
T: (03) 8345 2389

If no one answers, please leave a message on our voicemail.

If we don't return your call within 4 hours, call the after-hours number below and ask for the on-call Anaesthetic Registrar.
T: (03) 8345 2000

Do you need an interpreter?



You can ask for an interpreter if you need one.

Family Violence Support

1800 Respect National Helpline

You can get help if you have experienced sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

You can call any time of day or night.
1800 737 732 [1800respect.org.au](https://www.1800respect.org.au)