

## Patient information

# Information for women who have had a spinal or epidural anaesthetic

### Introduction

It is our aim that women who have had a spinal or epidural anaesthesia are seen by an anaesthetist before discharge from hospital, to ensure recovery is complete. Occasionally this is not possible, for example, if you have an early discharge within 24 hours after delivery.

### Side effects

It is very unusual for mothers to experience severe side effects following a spinal or epidural anaesthesia. However, should you experience any of the following, it is important that you speak to your midwife or General Practitioner (GP) as soon as possible, explaining you have recently had a spinal or epidural. It may be helpful to show them this booklet. They will be able to contact an anaesthetist for any further advice.

### Headache

Report any headache which is more severe than you would normally expect. Headaches following spinals or epidurals tend to be worse when you stand up and feel better when you lie down.

### Leg numbness

Occasionally you may experience a small area of numbness on your leg, which may take a few days to get better. This could be a side effect of the spinal or epidural, but may also happen when some of your nerves are bruised as the baby is born. Given time, numb patches will recover. Please report any worries to your midwife, especially if the numbness is getting worse.

### Leg weakness

If you have sudden onset of leg weakness, report **IMMEDIATELY** to you midwife or GP

## **Loss of bowel or bladder control, unable to pass urine.**

Any sudden onset of these problems should be reported **IMMEDIATELY** to your midwife or GP

## **Backache**

Backache is a common problem during pregnancy and after childbirth. An epidural or spinal should not cause long term backache.

Often you may feel a bit tender where the spinal or epidural was inserted, but this will recover after a few days.

If you have **severe back pain that suddenly starts**, report **IMMEDIATELY** to your midwife or GP

## **For urgent contact**

If you are unable to contact your own midwife or GP, please contact Ward F11 on 01284 713216 and ask to speak to a midwife.

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)*  
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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