

Epidural Bloodpatch Procedure

Spinal Headache

A spinal headache can happen after a needle goes in an area around your spine to give medicine or remove fluid. Headaches are caused by a leak of cerebral spinal fluid in your back.

This type of headache is also known as a post dural puncture headache. You usually feel better when you lie down and feel worse when you sit or stand.

An anesthesiologist (doctor who specializes in anesthesia) will confirm you have a spinal headache.

One treatment is an epidural bloodpatch procedure.

Epidural Bloodpatch Procedure

Your doctor takes a small amount of your blood and injects it into your spine to “patch” the leak. The injection seals the leak and relieves your headache.

What to Expect After the Procedure

The injection site might be sore for a few days.

During the Procedure

- An intravenous (IV) line may be started in your hand or arm. Blood will be taken out of your arm.
- Your back will be washed and prepped.
- The doctor will draw blood from your hand or arm and inject it into your spine where the fluid is leaking.

After the Procedure

- Your health care team will watch to see if the bloodpatch is working, and will watch for any side effects or reactions.
- You will need to lie flat for a while before you can sit up.

Risks

Your doctor will talk with you about the risks of the bloodpatch procedure. Risks include:

- headache that does not get better or that gets worse (uncommon)
- back pain for a few days (common) or a few months (uncommon)
- bleeding (rare)
- infection (rare)
- injury in or around the procedure site (rare).

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Activity

- For 48 hours, do not lift anything heavier than a gallon of milk.
- Avoid straining or pushing during a bowel movement.
- Drink extra water.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Take your pain medicines as directed.

Procedure Site Care

- For 3 days, avoid sitting in hot tubs or soaking in a bathtub.
- You may place a cold pack on the site.
 - Put a clean, dry towel on your skin before you place the cold pack.
 - Leave the cold pack on for 20 minutes at one time, 3 times each day, until the soreness is gone.
- Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.

When to Call Your Doctor (Anesthesiologist)

Call your doctor if you have:

- red area or swelling that is new or getting bigger
- bleeding from the bloodpatch site
- fluid from the bloodpatch site
- a headache with no new symptoms
- any questions or concerns.

When to Go to a Hospital Emergency Department

Go to a hospital Emergency Department if you:

- have fever or chills
- feel like throwing up (nausea) or are throwing up (vomiting)
- feel weak in your legs
- have numbness or tingling in your butt or legs
- have new bad pain in your neck, back or legs
- have a new headache with changes in your vision or other new symptoms
- lose control of your bowel or bladder.