

Mobilising with an epidural in labour

Information for patients

Background

Epidurals are a method of delivering a pain-relieving medicine called local anaesthetic to reduce labour pains. Historically, the epidural medication caused the legs to feel heavy. This meant it was safest to keep women in bed for the duration of labour whilst an epidural was in use.

Current epidural medication at Simpson's Centre for Reproductive Health (SCRH) has been adjusted so that motor block (or heavy legs) is less common. This means that many women can move more during labour. This is called a mobile epidural.

Mobilisation in labour has the following benefits:

- ✓ May reduce duration of labour
- ✓ May reduce risk of instrumental delivery/caesarean section
- ✓ Reduced risk of pressure injury to skin
- ✓ Increased ability to move positions for better comfort
- ✓ Possible increase in patient satisfaction.

Epidural

An epidural is an effective tool to provide pain relief in labour. If you are considering an epidural, additional information about the procedure, risks and benefits are found in resources below. At SCRH we now offer mobile epidurals. Your midwives can discuss this prior to delivery when considering your birth plan. Epidurals are given by the anaesthetic team at an appropriate time in your labour. Our team will be happy to discuss the procedure in more depth with you.

Mobilisation

A mobile epidural will hopefully allow more movement around your delivery room. The degree of movement you can expect may vary from moving positions in bed, standing at the bed space, going to the toilet or walking around your room. Your midwife will assess the epidural block at regular intervals and before moving to make sure it is safe to do so for you and your baby.

This assessment includes asking you to perform four tasks:

1. Straight leg raise



2. Check the feeling of soles of feet



3. Practise stand on feet



4. Bending of knees when standing



You will be supported throughout all of these steps. Someone should remain by your side at all times for your safety and support.

Feedback!

We are evaluating the patient experience of mobile epidurals. You may be asked to complete a questionnaire after reading this information which would be very helpful. We would love to hear your thoughts!

For any additional information please visit:

Labour Pains – Information on pain relief choices during labour

<https://www.labourpains.org/>



Your pain relief options in NHS Lothian – Maternity Services

<https://services.nhsllothian.scot/maternity/your-pain-relief-options-in-nhs-lothian/>

