

Epidural Analgesia During Labour

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Epidural analgesia is a central nerve block technique achieved by injection of a local anaesthetic close to the nerves that transmit pain, and is widely used as a form of pain relief in labour and onset of the analgesia is 5-30 minutes. (1)

Absolute contraindication for epidural are patient refusal, bacteraemia, local infection at the site of puncture, haemorrhagic diathesis or therapeutic anticoagulation and increased intracranial pressure. (2)

Technique of insertion

Epidural anaesthesia is performed by introducing a needle between the lumbar vertebrae and injecting local anaesthetic medication into the epidural space, via the epidural needle and/or a catheter inserted through the needle into the epidural space (Figure 1). (2,3)

Epidurals are usually safe, but there's a small risk of complications such as hypotension, post puncture headache after dural perforation, transient neurological syndrome, nerve injury with possible neuropathy, epidural hematoma and abscess.(2)

References

1. Anim-Somuah M, Smyth RMD, Cyna AM, Cuthbert A, Epidurals for pain relief in labour; Cochrane.org 2018
2. Ituk U, Maniker R, Crowley M, Epidural and combined spinal-epidural anesthesia:Technique; UpToDate 2022
3. Toledano RD, Van de Velde M, Epidural Analgesia and Analgesia; NYSORA

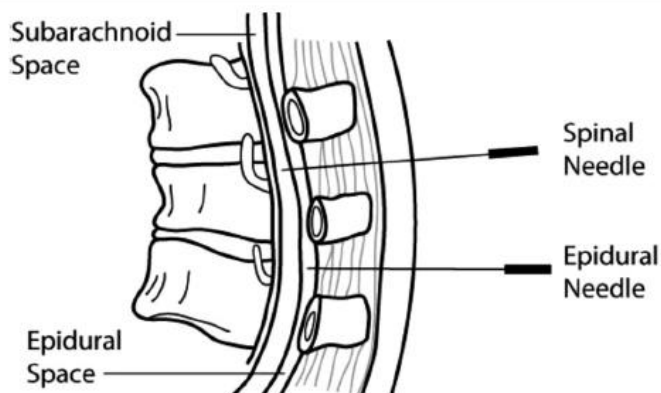


Image 1: The spinal and epidural spaces.