

Epidural Blood Patch

What is an epidural blood patch?

An epidural blood patch is a procedure to treat headaches caused by low pressure in the fluid around the spine and brain. Your own blood can seal a leak in the spine the same way a bicycle inner tube can be patched. This can happen because of a spinal fluid leak after a spinal procedure. In rare cases it may happen spontaneously (for no apparent reason).

What will happen during the procedure?

- A doctor (called an anesthetist) will talk with you about your situation and explain the procedure.
- You will be asked to lie on a bed with your back uncovered. The doctor will clean your back with a special cleaning solution.
- The anesthetist will put a small needle in your back to numb your skin. An X-ray or an ultrasound may be used to help find the best spot for the needle.
- When your skin is numb, a needle will be placed between the bones in your back (spine) until it is just outside the sac that holds spinal fluid. Then a small amount of your own blood will be injected through the needle.
- The needle will then be taken out.



What will happen after the procedure?

Mild back pain is common for 1-2 days after your procedure. You may take acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen every 4-6 hours, as needed, to help with the pain.

What should I do after going home?

- It may help to decrease the risk of your headache returning after your procedure if you:
 - › Drink 3-5 glasses of water per day for 1 week.
 - › Avoid lifting anything heavier than 10 pounds (including children) for 1 week.
- If you have pain after your procedure, you can use both ibuprofen and acetaminophen every 4-6 hours.
- Do not do any strenuous (hard) activity for the first week after your procedure.
- A mild stool softener can help make it easier to have a bowel movement (poop).
- You may feel better right away, but the blood patch is like a fresh scab on a cut. At first it is weak or soft, but will get stronger every day.
- Patients who lie down for at least 2 hours after the procedure feel better than those who try to get up quickly. Try to lie down as much as possible the first day.

What should I watch for after going home?

- › bad back pain that is getting worse
- › fever (over 38° C/100.4° F)
- › new numbness or weakness in your legs
- › new loss of control of your bladder or bowels

If you have any of the above symptoms, call locating at 902-473-2222 and ask for the anesthesia resident on call to be paged, OR go to the nearest Emergency Department.

*Prepared by: Emergency Services
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