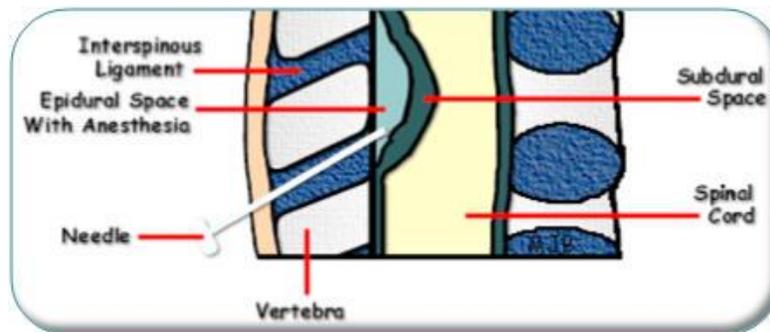


## Taking Care of Yourself After an Epidural Blood Patch



A very small percentage (less than 1% in our practice) of patients develop headache pain following a spinal anesthetic or epidural for labor analgesia. This headache is caused by the leakage of cerebral spinal fluid through a small hole in the lining that surrounds your spinal cord. While this does not cause any danger to your brain or spinal cord, the headache pain can be quite severe and debilitating.

An epidural blood patch was performed by your anesthesiologist to relieve your headache pain by sealing the hole in the membrane between your spinal cord and epidural space and stopping the leaking of spinal fluid. Most patients experience immediate relief of all or most of their headache pain. The blood taken from your arm and injected into your back forms a 'patch' to seal the hole in the membrane (dura) in a manner like applying a patch to an air leak in a tire. This patch must remain in place until the hole in the lining can heal itself. This usually only takes a couple of days.



After the procedure it is important to follow a few simple steps to make sure the new patch is not disrupted which could cause your headache symptoms to return. These simple steps include:



- Take it easy for the 48 hours after the procedure.
- Drink extra fluids.
- Take your usual pain medications (Motrin or Tylenol) if needed for any remaining headache symptoms or mild soreness/stiffness at the site of the blood patch procedure.
- A warm pack applied for short periods of time to your lower back may help relieve stiffness and soreness.

**Go to the Emergency Room if you develop any of the following symptoms after your blood patch:**

- Nausea, vomiting, fever, or chills
- Numbness or tingling down your buttocks and/or legs
- Weakness in your legs
- **New** onset of severe back or leg pain
- An inability to control your bowels or bladder



**If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 612-452-0858.**