

Epidural

Epidurals can remain in place for up to a week. Before the epidural catheter is removed you will receive regular painkillers which will continue your pain relief.

If you feel your pain is not well controlled at any time following your surgery, ask the ward nurse to contact the Acute Pain Nurse on your behalf.

Effective pain control enables you to do your deep breathing exercises, you will also be able to mobilise sooner with the physiotherapist. This will aid your recovery following your operation and enable you to go home earlier.



London Bridge Hospital

INFORMATION ON PAIN RELIEF

How to find us:

London Bridge Hospital is situated on the South Bank of the Thames. We are next to London Bridge mainline and underground stations with easy access to the city. Please note: no right hand turn from Borough High street into Duke Street Hill.

31 Old Broad Street is situated on Old Broad Street in the heart of the city and next to Tower 42 (formerly the Natwest Tower).

London Bridge Hospital

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Website www.londonbridgehospital.com

GP LIAISON

A service for GPs and patients who require assistance with referrals to consultants and Hospital services.

Opening hours: Monday-Friday

08.30-17.30hrs

Telephone: 020 7234 2009

Fax: 020 7234 2019

ACUTE PAIN CONTROL

This leaflet is designed to give you information on two of the common techniques in pain control used in this hospital. Levels of pain will vary between each patient, depending on the type of surgery you are having. Your Consultant Anaesthetist will discuss pain control with you prior to your operation. Post operatively you may be referred to the Acute Pain Nurse.

There are different methods of pain control available to assist the medical and nursing teams to ensure that any pain you experience is minimised.

Within this hospital we use a pain measurement tool. Throughout your stay your pain will be assessed and treated using this tool. You will be asked if your pain is mild moderate or severe. This is shown on the score below.

- 0 = no pain
- 1 = mild pain
- 2 = moderate pain
- 3 = severe pain

Our aim is to allow you to mobilise, take deep breaths or cough with only mild pain.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- We need you to tell the nursing staff if you are in pain.
- If you do not tell anyone you are in pain then your pain relief will be inadequate for your needs.

PLEASE TELL US IF

- You take painkillers at home
- You are allergic to any drugs or have stomach problems
- You have any other allergies

METHODS OF PAIN CONTROL

Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA)

PCA is a method of pain control used following moderate to major operations. You will be connected to a PCA syringe pump via a tube in your arm, the syringe contains a strong pain killer. Attached to the pump is a button which you can press to deliver pain relief as and when you need it. This gives you control over your pain.

The drug most frequently used in PCA's is Morphine. Patients often worry that they may overdose or become addicted, this is not the case.

Provided you alone operate the hand set it is impossible to overdose yourself. PCA pumps are programmed to allow medication to be delivered every 5 minutes only. A safe dose will have been prescribed by your doctor.

In addition, this pain control system is designed for short term use and therefore addiction is extremely rare.

Side effects

- You may feel sick. If this happens an anti-sickness drug will be given to you, it is important that you continue to use the PCA.
- Sometimes patient feel itchy. If this happens you will be given medication to help relieve this.
- You may become drowsy or fall asleep - do not worry. To prevent you waking up with some degree of pain, additional painkillers such a Paracetamol and Ibuprofen will be given as soon as you can take tablets. This will work with the Morphine to help reduce this type of pain.

Epidural Analgesia

Epidural analgesia is a form of pain control used following major operation. A very fine tube is inserted via a needle into your back; the pain killer is delivered via a locked pump. The medication bathes the pain nerves; this should numb any pain from the operation.

Side effects

- Difficulty passing urine; you will have a catheter. (This is a tube, inserted into your bladder, which will drain all your urine into a bag).
- Low blood pressure can occasionally occur, for this reason you will have fluid through a drip connected to your arm which can correct this.
- Itching. Should you experience this, inform the nurses and they will administer medication as a remedy.
- Headache, notify the nursing staff, additional painkilling tablets can be given.
- Depending on where the epidural catheter is placed you may experience some numbness in your legs. This is nothing to worry about, inform the nurse if this happens. Once the infusion is reduced or stopped this effect will disappear. However, the aim of the Epidural is to have you pain free and mobilising as quickly as possible, so some balancing of the dose may be needed once you start to get up. If your legs remain numb then you may have to stay in bed a while longer.