

Besides these general instructions remember also:

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*Promoting wellness. Ensuring care.*

How you want to be treated.



# Spinal or Epidural Anesthesia

## Discharge Instructions

[www.vch.ca](http://www.vch.ca) – [www.fraserhealth.ca](http://www.fraserhealth.ca)

The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team.

VCH Catalogue No. **ED.900.Sp46** To order: <http://vch.eduhealth.ca>

FH Catalogue No. **253393** To order: [patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca](http://patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca)

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## General Information

If you have had spinal or epidural anesthesia, the effects can persist for many hours.

## Important Points in Treatment

### You should take the following precautions:

- A responsible adult **MUST ACCOMPANY** you home (even if travelling by taxi) and we strongly advise you have someone care for you at home for the first 24 hours.
- **DO NOT** do any activities which require coordination or important decision-making for the first 24 hours, (i.e. drive a car, bicycle, travel alone by public transportation, operate heavy machinery, sign important papers).
- **DO NOT** drink any alcohol or take recreational drugs for the first 24 hours following surgery and/or when taking pain medication (harmful interactions could occur with the medications you received in surgery and/or with the pain medications).
- Rest in bed until you feel fully recovered from the anesthetic. For the first day, avoid vigorous physical activities such as jogging or aerobics or heavy lifting.
- Follow all instructions given to you by your doctor. **DO NOT** take more of any medication than prescribed.
- Drink plenty of fluids (minimum 4 cups/day) for 2–3 days.
- Please restart your usual prescribed medications immediately unless your Doctor gives you different instructions. We strongly advise you **not** to take herbal or Chinese medications for 1 week after your surgery.

### If you get a headache:

- increase your oral intake of fluids
- take Acetaminophen as indicated on the label (do not take this medication if you are allergic/sensitive to it).
- caffeine may help reduce the headache. We suggest drinking at least 2 cups of coffee or tea.
- avoid bright lights and noise.
- lying flat is usually more comfortable. The headache may only be present when your head is up.
- Ensure you keep appointments for follow-up care with your doctor. Contact your doctor's office to arrange an appointment.

### Notify the Doctor or go to the Emergency Department if any of the following happens:

- if you are unable to urinate within 8 hours and/or you are experiencing pain from a full bladder;
- you have any signs of infection (fever, spinal puncture site is red, swollen, has pus-like drainage, local tenderness);
- if you have a severe persistent headache for 2 days which is not relieved by the suggested measures noted previously;
- your prescribed medication does not relieve your pain;
- persistent nausea and vomiting.