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A05lite Spinal Anaesthetic

Expires end of December 2019

A more detailed version of this procedure specific information sheet is available. Please ask your health practitioner at any Western Australian public hospital for a copy.

Write questions or notes here:

This document will give you information about a spinal anaesthetic. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is a spinal anaesthetic?

A spinal anaesthetic (or spinal) involves injecting local anaesthetics and other painkillers into an area called the subarachnoid space, near your spinal cord. This numbs your nerves to give pain relief in certain areas of your body. A spinal can be used either on its own while you are awake, or together with sedation or a general anaesthetic. A spinal can also be used after your operation to give effective pain relief.

How is a spinal given?

Your anaesthetist will insert a needle, inject anaesthetic through it and then remove the needle (see figure 1). It should not be painful, although it can be uncomfortable.

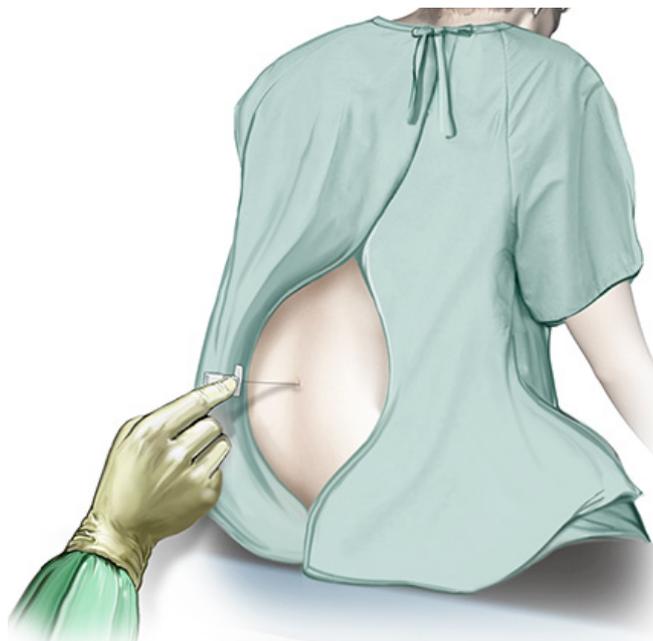


Figure 1
A spinal being given

A spinal usually lasts for one to three hours. The anaesthetist will put enough anaesthetics through the needle to make sure that it lasts longer than the expected length of the operation.

What complications can happen?

- Failure of the spinal
- Low blood pressure
- Headache
- Itching
- Difficulty passing urine

- Backache
- Loss or change of hearing
- Cardiovascular collapse
- Unexpected high block
- Infection around your spine
- Nerve damage
- Spinal abscess
- Blood clots
- Paralysis or death

Summary

A spinal anaesthetic can be used for most people, usually giving a safe and effective form of pain relief both during and after an operation or procedure.

Acknowledgements

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