

## Weekly meetings

In our hospital obstetric staff organizes weekly meetings with the participation of the anesthetist.

The meetings are aimed at pregnant women.

**All participants will be invited to sign this document certifying that the information has been received.**

OSPEDALE S. M. ANNUNZIATA  
Address: Via dell'Antella, 1 Ponte a Niccheri  
Bagno a Ripoli - Firenze

For information on meetings:  
SERVIZIO ACCOGLIENZA  
tel. 055 6936685  
Monday - Friday  
9.00 - 13.00

The meetings are held every Tuesday on the second floor of the hospital's administrative building from 14.00 to 16.00.

## On the website

Information and a video on analgesia in childbirth are available on the website [www.uslcentro.toscana.it](http://www.uslcentro.toscana.it)

Scan the QR code  
for direct access



Meeting of the day \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature

*This information is signed  
for acknowledgment and reading*

# ANALGESIA IN CHILDBIRTH



SOC ANESTESIA E RIANIMAZIONE  
Ospedale S. M. Annunziata

# CHILDBIRTH

Childbirth is a natural event characterized by strong emotional implications, some of which are related to the concern for pain due to uterine contractions, necessary for the normal evolution of labor.

Many women are able to cope well with pain that can also be managed with non-drug methods such as massage, immersion in hot water, posture. For others it can represent an impediment and it prevents them from living this moment in a serene way. In this case it is possible to resort to epidural analgesia which still allows you to give birth in a normal way by controlling pain.

## THE PAINLESS DELIVERY

### What is epidural analgesia?

The vertebral column, which is the bone structure that supports us, has a vertebral canal inside; it contains and protects the spinal cord from which the nerves originate, including those responsible for the pain of labor.

Outside the protective envelopes of the marrow, and therefore distant from it, we find a space, called epidural (or peridural), in which analgesic drugs are injected in order to block the perception of painful stimuli during labor.

### How is epidural analgesia performed?

The woman is placed sitting or sideways on a rigid bed with her back bent to form an arch. The anesthetist identifies a point in the lumbar region where, using a particular needle, he/she introduces a small catheter that will remain in there for all the labor time.

The catheter can be replenished with anesthetics without any additional injection. Thanks to the low doses of drugs used, pain sensitivity is blocked without impediment to movement, which generally allows the woman to get up and walk if she wishes. After 10-15 minutes from the time of the injection, complete pain relief is obtained and it lasts about 60-120 minutes; whenever the need arises, it is possible to administer a further dose of analgesic.

### When is analgesia recommended?

Birth analgesia is indicated in specific obstetric situations, such as in premature, post-mature, prolonged labor and in other clinical situations in which the relaxation of the pelvic muscles is necessary to facilitate the descent of the baby and the extraction maneuvers. There are also clinical situations in which epidural analgesia may be requested by the gynecologist: when it is necessary to reduce the stress of those mothers who suffer from cardiovascular, hepatic, renal, respiratory, metabolic diseases (diabetes), and high degree myopia (risk of retina detachment), or for obstetric reasons (maternal stress, dynamic dystocia).

In the event that an urgent cesarean section is needed, surgery can be undertaken by administering a higher concentration of anesthetic through the same catheter.

### When is analgesia performed?

In primiparous women, analgesia is performed after obstetric and gynecological evaluation, when labor is well underway and the cervical dilation is at least 2 cm (essential conditions for the normal progression of childbirth with analgesia). In women who have already had previous births, on the other hand, it can be done from the beginning of labor.

### What are the contraindications of the epidural technique?

Absolute contraindications are all bleeding diseases, the use of anticoagulants (usually used for example in valve prostheses), skin infections on the back, placental abruption and rare clinical situations possibly highlighted by the anesthetist.

### What can be the complications of epidural analgesia?

Epidural analgesia is a safe technique and has rare side effects: sometimes, depending on the drugs used, it can cause a modest and transient itch. Pain at the injection site occurs in few people and is indistinguishable from lower back pain due to changes in the spine during pregnancy.

The most important complications are two:

- the headache (0.5% of cases) even if annoying, is benign in nature and susceptible to adequate pharmacological treatment;
- spinal cord injuries are an occurrence observed very rarely (1 case out of 1,000,000).

*The anesthetists of the S.M. Annunziata Hospital*