

I'LL BE THERE: ENHANCING THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE DURING EPIDURAL PLACEMENT

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Background Information: Undergoing surgery is a tremendous stressor in anyone's life. Having an epidural placed before surgery adds to a patient's anxiety. While we know that the epidural is an effective way to manage post-op pain, many patients view it as another invasive procedure they must endure. We find that patients fear the epidural primarily because they have not been adequately educated about the process.

Objectives of Project: To improve patient experience during epidural placement by providing education, support, and a safe environment.

Process of Implementation: At Memorial Sloan-Kettering, we have a dedicated multidisciplinary team who helps with the placement of the epidural in the pre-operative setting. The epidural is placed in a safe and supportive environment, outside of the Operating Room, while the patient is being monitored. Placing the epidural this way is more efficient and cost effective than placing it in the Operating Room and it may provide preemptive analgesia.

The process begins as we escort the patient to a bed. Once the nursing assessment is complete, the epidural placement begins. Intravenous fluids, oxygen, and cardiac monitoring are then initiated. Next, a timeout is performed and the patient is positioned upright on the side of the bed. Midazolam is then administered. While the anesthesiologist is placing the epidural and the Registered Nurse (RN) is monitoring the patient, the Nursing Assistant (NA) or Patient Care Technician (PCT) holds the patient by their shoulders as their head rests comfortably on a pillow placed on a bedside table. As the anesthesiologist is explaining each step, the patient listens to the calming voice of the NA/PCT, who is telling them what is happening and what they can expect every step of the way. The RN provides support by holding the patient's hand. Within minutes, when the procedure is over, most patients ask, "You're done already!"

Statement of Successful Practice: By instituting the practice of monitoring and caring for patient undergoing epidural placement, patients have reported increase satisfaction and less anxiety during the epidural placement.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: By adhering to American Society of Perianesthesia Nurses (ASPN) guidelines and training of all Pre-Surgical Nurses, patients undergoing epidural placement will have a safe and successful experience.