



C-Obs 9

Standards for epidural/spinal anaesthesia in obstetric practice

The RANZCOG supports the endeavours of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) to continually upgrade the standard of anaesthesia in Australasian obstetric practice.

Provision of a competent prompt 24-hour epidural service is desirable in modern obstetric units. Epidural/spinal anaesthesia should only be performed in locations with appropriate resuscitation equipment, drugs and assistance to manage complications related to such procedures.

Major complications are infrequent but are occasionally life threatening and include profound hypotension, respiratory and cardiovascular collapse, convulsions and neurological damage.

Mastering and retaining the skills and knowledge necessary to manage these complications requires adequate training and continuing experience. Epidural blocks in obstetrics should be performed and maintained by appropriately trained medical staff, with privileges approved by the hospital. In some instances, top-ups may be performed by medical or nursing staff who have been credentialed for this purpose.

Links To Other Related College Statements

[C-Gen 2 Guidelines for consent and the provision of information regarding proposed treatment.](#)

Disclaimer

This College Statement is intended to provide general advice to Practitioners. The statement should never be relied on as a substitute for proper assessment with respect to the particular circumstances of each case and the needs of each patient.

The statement has been prepared having regard to general circumstances. It is the responsibility of each Practitioner to have regard to the particular circumstances of each case, and the application of this statement in each case. In particular, clinical management must always be responsive to the needs of the individual patient and the particular circumstances of each case.

This College statement has been prepared having regard to the information available at the time of its preparation, and each Practitioner must have regard to relevant information, research or material which may have been published or become available subsequently.

Whilst the College endeavours to ensure that College statements are accurate and current at the time of their preparation, it takes no responsibility for matters arising from changed circumstances or information or material that may have become available after the date of the statements.