

Script – Broadcast – The bond between mother and baby

INTRO

A [study](#) published in the Journal of Clinical Anesthesia says epidurals are effective in increasing the maternal/infant bond between mother and baby. And some of the findings point towards a decreased risk of postpartum depression as well in those in the mothers who received epidurals.

According to the study, there were 30% more complaints about the initial bonding between mother and baby from women who did *not* have an epidural, compared to those who did.

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According to the American Society of Anesthesiologists, an epidural provides anesthesia that creates a numbness from the belly area to the upper legs. It allows the mother to be awake throughout labor, as well as to feel pressure. The ability to feel labor pressure which enables pushing when it's time to give birth. It can take about 15 minutes for the pain medication to work, and the amount of medication can be increased or decreased as needed.

Dr. Casey Sager, an OB/GYN with OSF HealthCare, says ultimately the decision to have an epidural is up to the patient.

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Dr. Casey Sager, OB/GYN, OSF HealthCare

“I think that mom can focus on the emotions of welcoming the baby into the world instead of the pain that she just endured and that she might still be enduring after delivery because it isn't as simple as the baby is out and everything is good. There are still placenta and repairs and other things that happen that can be distracting. Whereas if the mother is comfortable, she can focus on baby and bonding and skin to skin time versus other things that are happening.” (:28)

TAG

Dr. Sager says studies like this are important to show that the benefits are not necessarily limited to decreased pain during labor and delivery, but afterwards as well in the postpartum period.

An epidural, like any procedure, has potential side effects. They can include a spinal headache, an itching reaction to the medications, nausea, and possible hypertension, which can all be treated with medication.