



A Review of OPIOID-INDUCED ITCHING after CESAREAN BIRTH

Barbara Hansen Cottrell

In the United States, cesarean surgical birth accounts for 32.8 percent of all births (Martin, Hamilton, Ventura, Osterman, & Mathews, 2013), and 95 percent of women with planned cesarean births are given regional anesthesia (Bucklin, Hawkins, Anderson, & Ullrich, 2005). Neuraxial anesthesia is a type of regional anesthesia that involves injection of anesthetic medication in the fatty tissue that surrounds the nerve routes (epidural) or into the cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds the spinal cord (spinal), resulting in numbing from the abdomen to the toes.

Abstract: Currently, about one-third of all women giving birth have a cesarean surgical birth, and the majority are given an epidural or spinal anesthetic containing an opioid for surgery. An unpleasant side effect experienced by many of these women is itching. This article reviews the literature on itching after spinal and epidural administration of opioids and how nurses can best manage this side effect. DOI: 10.1111/1751-486X.12187

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