



Caesarean Section

Care Closer to Home

with you  all the way

After discussion between you, your midwife and your obstetrician it has been decided to deliver your baby by caesarean section. The reason for this decision will have been explained to you at the time and is documented in your hand held antenatal notes

Prior to your caesarean section you will have a pre-operative assessment. This will involve an antenatal examination, blood tests and filling in of relevant paperwork. You may also receive information on 'enhanced post-op recovery' for after the operation.

During this time the staff will;

- Explain and discuss the physical preparation for your caesarean section.
- Show you around the maternity unit (if possible).
- Provide pre medication and explain 'nil by mouth'.
- Answer any questions you may have.

Please be aware that your planned caesarean section date/time may change in exceptional circumstances. This includes a high level of women on the delivery suite and/or postnatal ward or in emergency scenarios. This is in order to maintain safety for you and your baby and all of our other women. We understand this can cause disappointment and apologise in advance if this was to occur.

Types of Anaesthetic

Your caesarean section can be performed under a spinal anaesthetic or rarely a general anaesthetic may be used.

- Spinal – is a local anaesthetic injection in to your back to numb your lower body, you remain awake but may be aware of some pushing/ pulling sensations.
- General Anaesthetic-this is when you are put to sleep before the operation.

The day of the operation

You will be given an admission time and where to attend.

Before admission please ensure that you:

- Have a bath/shower.
- Remove all jewellery and contact lenses.
- Leave all your valuables at home.

- Remove nail varnish (including acrylic nails) and make-up.
- Do not eat or drink anything after the specified time.
- Take pre medication as prescribed.
- Bring all medication that you are currently taking with you.

On arrival the midwife will;

- Perform an antenatal examination.
- Listen to/ monitor your baby's heartbeat.
- Place a name band on your wrist.
- Provide you with a gown ready for theatre.
- Answer any questions you may still have.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form by the doctor.
- The anaesthetist will discuss your medical history and assess your general condition prior to the operation.

The midwife will also ask you a number of questions which will be duplicated by the anaesthetic nurse, and possibly by the anaesthetist and the doctor; this is purely for safety reasons. A midwife will also accompany you to theatre.

Birth Partner

Only one birthing partner can be with you in theatre if you are having a spinal for your operation. You will both be able to see and hold your baby soon after delivery, including having skin-to-skin contact with your baby.

If you have a general anaesthetic your birthing partner will not be able to accompany you to theatre. With your consent your baby will be taken to your birthing partner as soon as possible and you will see your baby soon after you wake from the anaesthetic.

Transfer into theatre

Care will be given by the anaesthetic team. A drip infusion (IV) will be inserted to provide fluid whilst the operation is in progress. The anaesthetic will be commenced; following this your catheter will be inserted into your bladder and left in place until you are mobile.

What to expect after the Caesarean Section

- **Wound**

This is normally at bikini line level and will have a dressing in place for up to 48 hours. Your wound will be closed with either dissolvable stitches, a continuous stitch or staples. These are usually removed around day 5 after the operation.

- **Preventing blood clots**

You may be prescribed treatment to try and prevent deep vein thrombosis / pulmonary embolism. See separate information Leaflet “Reducing the risk of venous thrombosis”

You will also be encouraged to move around the bed. Early mobilisation will be encouraged to help blood circulation in your legs.

- **Analgesia – Pain Relief**

The effects of the spinal anaesthetic will gradually wear off in the hours following your operation. You will be asked to consent to pain relieving suppository to be placed in your rectum and given at the end of your operation, whilst you are still numb. This will provide good analgesia. Take regular oral analgesia in the first few days to enable you to be mobile

- **Food/Drink**

A drip will remain in place for as long as needed to maintain nourishment and hydration, however some women may not need any IV fluid. You may feel very thirsty after your operation, and you will be encouraged to have sips of water which will gradually be increased over the first hour. Refreshments and light diet will be provided when you are ready.

- **Vaginal Bleeding**

Following a caesarean section you will have normal post birth vaginal bleeding (lochia) for several weeks.

- **Baby**

The maternity staff will help you to care for your baby whilst you are immobile.

- **Visitors**

Whilst you are on the labour ward, visiting will be restricted to your birth partner only. When you are transferred to the postnatal ward normal visiting times will apply.

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