



Giving birth by caesarean section

A caesarean section or C-section is the delivery of a baby or babies through a surgical opening of the mother's lower belly.

Home preparation

- Follow instructions provided regarding fasting and hydration.
- Remove all jewelry (including piercings) as well as artificial nails.
- Tie back your hair with a metal-free rubber band.
- Do not apply body lotion or oil to your stomach.
- Do not shave your stomach or pubic area at home. A nurse will assess this situation upon your arrival.
- Arrive at the location and time you were told when you made your appointment. Bring your hospital card, your bag (clothing, toiletries, etc.) as well as the one for your baby.

Upon your arrival at the hospital

- A nurse will settle you in a room to begin preparations.
- We ask that you wear a hospital gown and remove your under garments.
- The nurse will check your baby's heart rate with a monitor and will draw a blood sample and will insert an intravenous line.
- If necessary, the nurse will shave the operation site.
- An intravenous line with a solution will be inserted to ensure hydration, to administer certain medications if needed, or to intervene quickly in case of an emergency. It is usually inserted when extracting the blood sample in preparation for surgery.
- A catheter will be installed to prevent urine from accumulating in the bladder during the procedure. It is possible that it is put into place once inside the operating room.
- Once operating personnel are ready, the nurse will accompany you and your support person to the operating room.

Details of the procedure

- Upon arriving in the operating room, the personnel will explain their role to the support person and what is expected of them. If not already prepared for the caesarean section, the personnel will provide the individual with the appropriate covering and indicate where to wait until someone comes for them.
- During this time, you will be brought into an operating room. You will be seated on the operating table where the anesthetist will administer an epidural or spinal anesthetic. The procedure consists of inserting a catheter into your back along your spine to the epidural space which numbs the lower body. Thus, you will be awake during your C-section but will not experience any pain.
- You will then lay on the table and your stomach will be disinfected. It is usually at this time that a catheter is inserted if it hasn't already been done in your room.
- Your stomach will be covered with sterile drapes and a large drape will be placed so that neither you nor your support person can see the surgical procedure.
- At this time, a personnel member will go get your support person to join you.
- It is not until after the effectiveness of the anesthetic is tested that the gynecologist will proceed with the first incision. You will probably feel the touch, and a pressure (sometimes strong) could also be felt when the baby is

being delivered. These sensations are normal and sometimes unpleasant, but are not painful.

- Upon the delivery of the baby, the nurse will take your baby to a heated table where she will dry the baby and ensure that their airway is clear. Your support person can come to the table. If the baby is well, he or she will be brought close to you. We can then place the baby on your chest so that both of you can benefit from skin to skin contact immediately after birth.
- Once the operation is over, you will be transferred to the recovery room or directly to your room, where your vital signs will be monitored closely. If you are in the recovery room, your support person and baby can follow you, if personnel is available. If you wish to breastfeed, an attempt at latching on can be tried at this time. If your support person and baby cannot stay with you in the recovery room, they can experience skin to skin contact until you return to your room.

After your caesarean section

- Once you leave the recovery room or operating room, you will be taken to your room on a stretcher and transferred to your bed.
- The nurse will check your vital signs frequently.
- You will rest in bed for the first few hours. Generally, the first time you get out of bed will be a few hours after your C-section. Do not attempt to get out of bed on your own for the first time, a nurse will help you. It is important that you become mobile soon after your procedure:
 - » It will speed up recovery
 - » Facilitate healing
 - » Improve blood circulation
 - » Prevent complications
- The intravenous and catheter will be removed upon recommendation of the doctor, usually within the first 24 hours after the C-section.
- Eating will gradually resume after a few hours according to your tolerance level.
- Since a C-section often causes more pain than a vaginal delivery and that your movements will be limited, it is important that a person (spouse or support person) remain with you to help you look after your baby for at least the first 24 hours.
- According to the type of dressing applied and if there are staples or sutures closing your wound, the staples or sutures will be removed when your dressing is removed (or when advised by the doctor) by a health care professional. Wound closure strips will be applied. If the wound is healed, you will be able to remove the strips after 7 days. If you have stitches with absorbable sutures, there is nothing to remove. If necessary, please refer to the brochure on staples and stitches which will be provided by the hospital.
- You could receive sub-cutaneous injections (Heparin) to protect you against phlebitis, depending on your medical assessment.



Recovery after a C-section

- It is normal to experience severe pain following a C-section. Pain will be more intense during the first 48 hours. It will feel like a gnawing or burning pain which will gradually subside. You could require pain relief medication. At the hospital, it will be important to notify the nurse of the pain you feel so that she can provide you with relief and the doctor will give you a prescription when you are released from the hospital.
- Some precautions during the first weeks:
 - » If possible, avoid using stairs but go slowly if you must.
 - » Chose showers. Talk to your doctor or medical professional with regard to bathing or swimming.
 - » For several weeks, avoid lifting objects heavier than your baby, around 10 pounds.
 - » Gradually resume your activities according to your tolerance level; walking is permitted as soon as you are released from the hospital.
 - » For more intense activities such as cycling, jogging, aerobics, weight training, gradually resume them when your tolerance level allows and according to the doctor's advice.
- Vaginal bleeding can last from 3 to 6 weeks and should be diminishing. Notify your doctor if it increases.
- Unless otherwise stated, your wound will not require any special care. Following the removal of the dressing, wash the area with soap when you shower. Keep scar dry and free from humidity especially if it is located in a deep skin fold.
- Contact a doctor if certain warning signs appear:
 - » Wound shows signs of redness, heat or swelling
 - » Discharge from the wound
 - » Increase in pain
 - » Wound separation
 - » Fever, generalized malaise, breathing difficulty
 - » Leg pain, redness or swelling (phlebitis)
 - » Heavy and offensive vaginal discharge
 - » Pain when urinating
 - » Severe headache, stomach pain or change in vision
 - » Specifically for negative-pressure wound therapy (NPWT), consult a medical professional if any of the following conditions appear or are in addition to the ones mentioned above:
 - Discharge goes from clear to cloudy or to dark red
 - Dressing quickly becomes saturated with blood
 - Dressing appears to be loose
 - You feel pain
 - The warning light flashes continuously

Smokers should avoid smoking (or reduce consumption) because it increases the risk of infections and poor wound healing.

The dressing

The doctor could apply one of these two dressings to your wound following your C-section:

OPSITE-Post-op visible

With this dressing, you can shower with it in place provided that you avoid direct exposure to the water stream and do not get it soaked with water. If the dressing gets wet, it could peel off.

You must leave the dressing in place for 7 days. On the 7th day, a health care professional will remove it.

If, before the 7th day, the liquid absorbed from the wound reaches the edge of the pad, consult a health care professional so that the dressing can be changed.

Negative-Pressure Wound Therapy (NPWT)

This dressing is equipped with a pump that exerts negative pressure. When the pump turns on, air is extracted from the dressing which allows excess liquid from the wound to begin to penetrate the dressing. You could experience a light suction feeling.

When sleeping, ensure that the pump is placed in a safe location where it cannot fall.

You can take a light shower but must disconnect the pump and place it in a safe location away from water. The dressing should not be in a direct water stream or be submerged in water. When the extremity of the tubing affixed to the dressing is disconnected, make sure that it faces down to prevent water from getting in. To disconnect the dressing pump:

- Press the orange button to discontinue treatment
- Unscrew both parts of the connector
- Place pump in a safe location



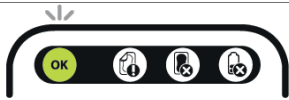
Warning on pump placement

The PICO 7 pump contains a magnet. Keep the PICO 7 pump at a distance of 10 cm (4 inches) away from other medical devices, at all times. Otherwise, these devices will not function properly which could cause severe consequences, including the death of the patient.



For more information, consult operating instructions.

Warning lights:

The green warning light flashes OK. The pump functions correctly, the pressure is preset.	
The orange warning light flashes AIR LEAKAGE. A serious air leakage is detected. You must press the edge of the dressing until there are no creases. The green warning light will start to flash when the problem has been resolved. If it does not, contact a health care professional.	
The green warning light OK and the orange light WEAK BATTERIES are flashing.	
The orange warning light DRESSING SATURATED is flashing. The dressing is saturated or the filter is blocked. The negative-pressure is not running. Contact your health care professional to replace the saturated dressing with a new one.	

You must leave the dressing in place for 7 days. On the 7th day, a health care professional will remove it.



Additional information

For more information on C-sections and recovering from one, please consult « ***Mieux vivre avec notre enfant*** » www.inspq.qc.ca/mieux-vivre/version-pdf, your health care professional or Info-Santé at 8-1-1.

The use of the term support person includes a spouse, a family member or companion at the birth. However, in the case where the companion is not the spouse, it is possible that the process occurs differently. Please see your health care professional for more details.

Contact information



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