



How you want to be treated.

# Having a Planned Caesarean Birth



**Maternity Centre  
St. Paul's Hospital**

## Caesarean birth

A caesarean birth or caesarean section is surgery to deliver a baby. (It is commonly called a C-section.) The baby is taken out through the woman's abdomen (tummy) by cutting an opening in the skin and uterus (womb).

Some women are scheduled for a planned (elective) caesarean birth. If this is the case, your surgery date is booked by your doctor.

Caesarean births are done in our Operating Room. You may have one support person with you in the Operating Room during the surgery, if your doctor or midwife and the anesthesiologist agree.

This booklet tells you about how to prepare and what to expect before, during, and after your surgery.

**Support person** is the person who helps and supports a woman before, during, and after childbirth. For example, this person helps the woman through birth contractions, reminding her of her breathing techniques, or helps care for the baby after birth. It may be the woman's partner or another person.

**Obstetrician:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Caesarean Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time of Caesarean Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Arrive at the Hospital:** \_\_\_\_\_

## The day before your C-section

All women who are having a planned C-section visit our Maternity Clinic the day before their surgery date. The clinic is located in the Maternity Centre, on the 3rd Floor of the Providence Building. We encourage your support person to accompany you.

### During this visit, we do the following:

- Review your pregnancy and medical history.
- Listen to your baby's heart beat.
- Take a small blood sample. (This is to confirm that you are healthy for surgery and to check your blood type.)
- Answer any questions you and your partner (or support person) may have about the planned C-section.

If your C-section is planned for the morning:	If your C-section is planned for the afternoon:
Have a snack and a drink before going to bed the night before.	Have breakfast before 7:00 in the morning on the day of your surgery.
Do not eat, drink, or chew anything after midnight the night before your surgery. This includes candy or gum.	Do not eat, drink, or chew anything after 7:00 in the morning. This includes candy or gum.

Your surgery may be cancelled and booked for another day if you do not follow these guidelines.

If you have any existing health problems or have any concerns about having an anesthetic, we will arrange for you to see anesthesiologist (the doctor who gives you medicines during the surgery so you do not feel pain).

## The morning of your C-section

- Bathe or shower.
- Remove all nail polish.
- Wear your glasses, not contact lenses.
- Wear comfortable clothes to the hospital.
- Leave credit cards and large amounts of money at home.
- **Do not** wear make-up.
- **Do not** wear jewellery or bring jewellery to the hospital.

If you are taking regular medicines or are a diabetic, your obstetrician will give you specific instructions about your medicines.

Come to the hospital at the time written on the front of the booklet. Go to the Surgical Day Care.

Your support person should stay with you from the time you come to the hospital until your baby is born. This is in case the time of your surgery is moved forward or delayed.

## Surgical Day Care

Here is what we do to prepare you for the surgery and birth of your baby:

- Ask you to change into a hospital gown.
- Complete a pre-surgical checklist, take your blood pressure and your temperature, and answer any questions you may have.
- Your obstetrician makes a small mark on your tummy with a marker/pen. This is done as a safety check.
- Listen to your baby's heart beat again and feel your tummy to check the baby's position.
- Ask you to drink a small amount of liquid antacid. This helps reduce the chances of you having an upset stomach during the surgery.
- Arrange for your support person to put on operating room clothing called hospital 'scrubs' to wear while in the operating room. Your support person must change back into his or her own clothes when you return to the Maternity Centre.

**Note:** Only you, your support person, and a camera are allowed in the operating room. No cell phones or personal items are allowed.

## The Operating Room

**Intravenous:** We start an intravenous (intra meaning 'into' and venous meaning 'vein' - commonly called an IV). We use a needle to put a small flexible tube into a vein in one of your arms. This is so we can give fluid and medicines directly into your body.

**Pain Control:** The anesthesiologist prepares for the anesthetic. Most women get an anesthetic that numbs only the lower part of your body. It is called a 'spinal'. This type of anesthetic lets you be awake during your surgery so you can see your baby right away. You will not feel pain. The medicine used for the spinal is quite safe for both you and your baby.

After the spinal is working and you are feeling numb, we place a small tube into your bladder known as a Foley catheter. This tube collects your urine and stays in place until the day after surgery.

**The C-Section:** Your obstetrician starts the surgery by making an incision in your skin above your pubic hairline and another one in your uterus. You may feel some movement your baby is gently removed from your body. The doctor clears your baby's mouth and nose of fluids. The umbilical cord is clamped and cut. After your baby is born, the doctor closes the incision in your uterus with suture (stitches) and in your skin with staples.

**Your Baby:** A pediatrician (a doctor whose speciality is babies and children) is present at the birth. This doctor checks your baby as soon as it is born. Your support person can help trim the baby's umbilical cord. If your baby is okay, you and your support person can hold and cuddle with the baby soon after it is born.

**Pictures:** Your support person is allowed to take pictures or videos of your new baby in the operating room. However, your support person is not allowed to take pictures or video of the surgery. You can only take photos or videos of hospital staff if they say you can. Please ask for their permission.

## **Your recovery**

Most moms and babies stay in the hospital for 48 to 72 hours after a C-section.

This section briefly describes your recovery. For more detailed information about your stay in the Maternity Centre, please download and review our *'Having Your Baby at St. Paul's Hospital'* booklet.

Go to [www.providencehealthcare.org](http://www.providencehealthcare.org)  
(Info for Patients + Residents > Programs and Services > Maternity)

**You and your baby stay together at all times** unless you, your baby, or both of you have a medical problem.

## **During your recovery, you can expect us to:**

- Check your blood pressure, heart rate, and temperature.
- Check your baby's heart rate and temperature.
- Check your incision and bandage.

## **The day of your surgery**

- Your nurse helps you to get up and walk around your room within 6 hours after your surgery. Moving around can speed up your recovery and help prevent blood clots and constipation.
- To start with, we offer you ice chips. If you are feeling well and not sick to your stomach, you can gradually go back to eating normally.

## **The day after your surgery**

- We take out your intravenous.
- We remove the Foley catheter.
- You can take a shower.

## **Two days after your surgery**

- We remove the staples that were holding your skin closed. Your skin should have healed enough by this time.

**Medicines:** We have what is called a '*Self-Administered Medication Program*' in the Maternity Centre. This means we give you a supply of medicines to keep at your bedside. You can then take them when you need them (self-administer). Included in the supply are medicines for pain and constipation.

Take your pain medicine regularly so you can move around and care for your baby without too much pain.

We suggest you take stool softeners for a couple of days so you can have softer bowel movements. This helps prevent any pain and straining on your incisions.

To learn more about these medicines, read the information sheet called '*Self-Administered Medication Program*'.

**Breastfeeding:** Your C-section should not stop you from breastfeeding. We encourage all mothers to breastfeed their babies. Breast milk is the best food for your new baby during the first two years of life and beyond. Our nurses will help you and your baby get off to a good start.

For the first few days, you and your baby will be learning how to breastfeed. It often takes practice. Skin-to-skin contact will help you to be successful. To learn more about breastfeeding and skin-to-skin contact, refer to the booklet '*Having Your Baby at St. Paul's Hospital*'.

## **What if you go into labour before your planned C-section?**

For women who have planned to have caesarean section, about one third of these women go into labour before their planned surgery.

You may continue to a normal vaginal delivery or proceed with the caesarean birth as planned.

## **What would you like to know more about?**

If you have any questions or concerns about your planned C-section, please contact your doctor or midwife.