



You Are Scheduled for a Cesarean Section

What is a cesarean section?

A cesarean section, or c-section, is the delivery of a baby through a surgical incision in the mother's abdomen and uterus. In certain circumstances, a c-section is scheduled in advance. In others, it's done in response to an unforeseen complication.

Preparing for Surgery

Before the day of your surgery, you may have lab work, including blood and urine tests, to check for diabetes and other medical issues. You may meet with an anesthesiologist to discuss your options for anesthesia. You will be asked to not eat or drink anything for eight to twelve hours before your surgery. You will be asked to remove jewelry before coming to the hospital and to leave valuables at home. We also ask that you and your family refrain from using your cell phone in the hallways of patient care areas so as not to disturb other patients.

Checking into the Hospital

Once you've arrived at the hospital, you will register in Outpatient Registration (on the first floor) and be escorted to your room in Labor and Delivery. Your family will be asked to wait in our waiting room for a short period of time while we complete your initial assessment. You will be asked to change into a hospital gown and provide a urine sample. You may be asked to take a shower using a special soap which reduces the amount of normal bacteria on your body. After you've undergone a physical assessment (which includes checking vital signs and reviewing your medical history), an IV will be started. You will be encouraged to ask questions and will be asked to sign several consent forms for your surgery.

During Surgery

When the time comes, a nurse will transport you and your support person to the surgical suite. Your support person is allowed to sit at your side during your operation. Your support person will be given hospital scrubs to wear during your surgery and will be guided by the surgical staff. During the operation you can take pictures with your camera but we ask that you do not videotape during the delivery.

After an anesthetic is administered (usually spinal anesthesia), you will lie down on an operating table and a catheter will be inserted to drain urine during your C-section and until you can attend to your own bathroom needs. Your support person will join you in the surgical suite after your spinal anesthesia is placed. Your doctor or attending nurse will then set up a curtain above your chest to separate you from your surgical team (giving you both some privacy during your operation). Your arms may be loosely secured to keep you from accidentally reaching into the sterile surgical area.

Spinal anesthesia, the method generally preferred by doctors and hospitals, allows you to be awake during the operation. You won't feel pain, but you will probably feel pressure and pulling throughout the procedure. You will be able to talk to your support person and your doctor during the procedure. There will be several staff members in the room to care for both you and your baby. One nurse is assigned to care for your baby at all times. There will also be your doctor, the anesthetist, and at least two surgical staff members.

Post-Op

After giving birth, you'll be allowed to see your baby before the nursery nurse takes him or her to be examined, measured, and weighed. Your significant other is encouraged to go with your newborn at this time while your surgical team finishes caring for you.

The Recovery Room

As your anesthesia begins to wear off, you'll start to feel sensation returning to your toes. Women are usually moved from the surgery room to a recovery room (not yet your hospital room) at this time so a nurse can care for you as your anesthesia wears off. As the effects of the anesthesia wear off, you may begin to start feeling discomfort around your incision. Medication can be administered to manage this pain, so don't be afraid to ask your nurse for information on pain-relief options. You usually remain in the recovery room for approximately one hour.

Guests on Your Baby's Birthday

Sometimes women become groggy and nauseated after a Cesarean operation, often due to effects of the anesthesia, so it may be a good idea to limit visitors on the day of your procedure. Instead, plan on having guests come to see you and the baby on day two or later to give yourself the time you need to begin recovering from the surgery. Rest is important for your recovery.

Recovery Time

Within 24 hours of the delivery, your catheter and IV will be removed and you'll be helped out of bed so you can walk and move around. This is very important to get your circulation going and decrease your risk of blood clots. Though it will be difficult initially, standing and walking will actually help you to heal more rapidly. Depending on your rate of recovery, your nurse may also allow you to take a shower once you are able to move around and if your incision is healing properly.

You may find yourself hungry once you start moving around again, but you will not be allowed to eat solid foods immediately following surgery. You will be given ice chips and liquids and will then progress to solids. As you begin eating solid foods, go slowly and don't be surprised if you have some gas. Your nurse will ask you if you have passed gas during your stay, a sign that your intestines are functioning well.

Following a c-section delivery, expect to remain in the hospital for a minimum of three days. Your vital signs will be monitored, your bleeding checked, your incision examined for signs of complications.

Thank you for choosing Touchette Regional Hospital for your delivery! Our nurses are here to help you recover and to bond with your baby. Please keep your nurses informed about what you need-we want your birth experience to be a positive one!