Cesarean Delivery ("C-section") Information for Patients

This handout will discuss how to prepare before your cesarean delivery ("c-section"). It will also cover what to expect during your surgery, hospital stay, and after you go home. Your doctors might need to change some steps depending on your situation.

Before Surgery
At the clinic visit you will meet with your doctor, nurse practitioner, or midwife. Ask any questions you may have to your doctors and nurses. Nursing staff will give you instructions to prepare you for surgery.

Night Before Surgery

- Eat a normal meal at dinner time. **No** solid food after midnight.
- It is okay to drink clear liquids up to two hours before coming to the hospital. Examples: water, coffee **without** creamer/milk, apple juice. Confirm these instructions with your providers.
- Remove all jewelry, body jewelry, body piercings, nail extensions and hair extensions/clips.

Day of Surgery
Check in at your hospital at the time and location provided. You will then meet your obstetrics, anesthesiology and nursing care team members. We will ask you to sign forms giving your consent for the surgery. Ask your doctor any questions.

Then, we will place your intravenous (IV) lines, check your baby and prepare you for surgery. When you are ready, we will take you to the operating room.

During Surgery
Once you are in the OR for surgery, we will:

- Perform a safety check to confirm your name, date of birth, and the surgery being performed.
- Give you a spinal/epidural anesthetic for pain control during surgery.
- Place compression devices on your legs to prevent blood clots.
- Place a catheter in your bladder to drain urine.
- Clean your stomach (and vagina in some cases).
- Place surgical drapes.
- Confirm that you are comfortable for surgery to start.
- Have a support person will join you in the operating room, if able.

After delivery the baby will be checked by the pediatric team. When baby is ready, the baby will be brought to you or family for bonding.

After Surgery
You will go to the recovery room for about two hours, or until you can move your legs around. Then you will be brought to a postpartum room. You will stay there for the rest of your hospital stay.

If you are having pain that is **not** controlled, inform your nurse. If you do not have any nausea, you may eat normally.

When walking for first time, your nurse will help you to the side of the bed. This is for your safety.

Post-Op Care
You will receive instructions for incision care and medicines before discharge. At home, alternate using acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) for pain. Use stool softeners as directed when necessary.

Activity
- Start walking in the hallways of the hospital and at home at least six times a day.
- Remember to rest and sleep when your baby sleeps.
- **No** lifting anything heavier than your baby or car seat.

Diet
Eat regular healthy meals and drink lots of water.

Follow Up
You will receive a post-partum visit appointment after discharge.

When to Call
You will be given instructions for things to watch out for and when to call your clinic or return to the hospital.

Who to Call
If you have questions, please contact your provider through MyChart or call your provider listed in your After Visit Summary or After Hospital Care Plan. For a list of UW Health Clinics, visit www.uwhealth.org/.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 7/2025 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#8448.