

Cesarean Birth

After Visit Summary

This is general information. Please see your After Visit Summary for how to take care of yourself after surgery.

Your health care team will work with you to understand any challenges you have after your hospital stay. This will help your team work toward a plan to make sure you have the right care and support to help manage your health after you leave the hospital.

Your Surgery

In a Cesarean birth, your baby is born through an incision (surgical cut) in your abdomen. The surgery takes about 30 to 60 minutes. Your baby is born 5 to 10 minutes after the surgery begins. The rest of the time is needed to remove the placenta and repair the incisions.

Before the Surgery

- Tell your health care provider if you:
 - have a latex allergy
 - have diabetes
 - take a blood-thinner medicine.
- Remove any jewelry or piercings.
- Arrange to have someone drive you home. You will not be able to drive after the procedure.

Your Incision

- Steri-Strips® (thin paper-like strips) will be placed on your incision.
 - You may shower with them on.
 - These strips will fall off in about 10 to 14 days.
 - If they don't fall off on their own, gently pull them off. (They do not need to be replaced.)
- Follow any instructions your health care provider gives you.

Activity

- You may take a shower. Do not take a tub bath until your health care provider says it is OK.
- Rest when your baby rests.
- For the first 1 to 2 weeks after birth:
 - Limit your activity to caring for yourself and your baby.
 - If you had an exercise routine during pregnancy, ask your health care provider when you can begin again.
 - Try not to lift anything heavier than your baby.
 - If you have other children who want to be held, sit down and have them climb into your lap rather than lifting them.
 - Limit your trips up and down stairs. Take the stairs slowly.

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- Walking is OK right away.
- You can resume sexual activity when your health care provider says it is OK.
- Avoid the following for 4 weeks:
 - vacuuming
 - gardening
 - washing floors.
- Follow your health care provider's instructions for when you can drive and return to work or school.
- Avoid tobacco and secondhand smoke. They can slow your recovery.

Pain Relief

- Take any prescription or over-the-counter medicine as directed.

Food and Beverages

- Eat well-balanced meals. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.
- Drink more liquids.
- Avoid alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medicine.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider at once if you have any of the following:

- blood clots that are large (baseball size), especially if they have whitish tissue, bright red bleeding that soaks a pad in an hour or less, or both
- a bad-smelling or greenish vaginal discharge
- stitches that separate
- pain, redness or pus-like drainage at the site of your stitches
- an abdominal incision that is red, warm to the touch, or has drainage
- tenderness in your abdomen, other than the usual tenderness around a Cesarean incision
- constant back, abdominal or pelvic pain
- fever or chills with a temperature of 100.4 F or higher
- a hard, red, painful area in your breast, along with fever or chills
- pain or burning when passing urine, a change in how often you pass urine, or not being able to empty your bladder
- any trouble breathing
- a bad headache or double or blurred vision
- deep redness, warmth, or swelling in any area of your leg(s) or pain when you point your toes toward your nose
- a feeling of sadness, anxiety or depression that lasts longer than 1 week
- not enough energy to care for yourself or your baby
- questions or concerns.

Follow-up Appointment

Please keep all follow-up appointments with your health care provider or specialist, even if you are feeling well.