

Pre-Operative Instructions for Planned Cesarean Section

Congratulations on your upcoming birth! The Bain Birth Center team is piloting a program of enhanced recovery after cesarean delivery aimed at improving the health and well-being of our patients and their babies. We hope it will also have a positive impact on your entire birth experience.

As part of this program, we want to provide you with pre-operative instructions to help best prepare you for your birth experience.

Timing/Location

Your cesarean section will occur on the 5th floor of the Needham Building at Mount Auburn Hospital. No registration is needed, you may go directly to Labor & Delivery

There are 2 scheduled c-sections daily, one at 9am and one at 11am. **Please arrive 2 hours before your scheduled time.**

*Please note, scheduled C-sections are sometimes delayed due to unscheduled events on the labor floor. We do our best to go for surgery on time, but please understand some delays are out of our control.

Pre Operative Information

Nutrition

You may have solid food up to 8 hours before your surgery, it is usually easiest to **stop eating any solid food after midnight** the night before your surgery.

We recommend you drink a clear beverage with 50g of carbohydrate **up to 2 hours** before your surgery. Examples are:

Gatorade 945 ml (54 g carbohydrate) ,

Apple juice 475 ml (56 g carbohydrate), no pulp,

Ensure Pre-Surgery Drink

You may have additional water or other clear liquids (nothing with cream, milk or pulp such as orange juice) **up to 2** hours before your surgery.

Do not have anything by mouth 2 hours before your surgery.

If you have gestational diabetes or pre-existing diabetes in pregnancy, please do not drink the carbohydrate drink. You may drink water only the morning before your surgery.

Skin Care

Do not shave or wax pubic hair in the 2 weeks leading up to your Cesarean delivery.

Please purchase 1 bottle of “Hibiclens” to use in the shower the night before your surgery, paying careful attention to the lower abdominal area. “Hibiclens” or its generic equivalent can be purchased over the counter at any pharmacy.

Arrival to Labor & Delivery

Upon arrival to Labor & Delivery you will be taken to the Pre/Post Op Recovery Area.

You will be given a hospital gown to change into and a nurse will take your vital signs, put you on the fetal monitor and place an IV (intravenous) catheter to give you IV fluids before, during and after your surgery. In the pre-op holding area, you will be given antibiotics to help prevent infection at the time of C-section as well as non-narcotic pain medication and anti-nausea medication.

Anesthesia and the OB provider will meet with you to review your medical/surgical/OB history and sign consents.

Your support person will be given surgical coveralls to put on over their clothes to wear into OR.

During Your Cesarean Delivery

Anesthesia

Most scheduled Cesarean Sections are done with a spinal or combined spinal-epidural anesthetic. The spinal medicine is intended to make your body go numb from your chest down through your legs. The surgery will not start until you are numb. It is normal to feel some pressure and tugging during your cesarean section. Let your anesthesia provider know if you feel pain or discomfort.

How is Spinal Anesthesia given?

A numbing medicine will be placed in your back. Other medications may be used, if needed, to make you more comfortable. You may feel pressure when the medicine is given, but it should not be painful. After a few minutes, your legs will start to feel numb.

I am very nervous about my cesarean section; can I be asleep for it?

Spinal anesthesia is safer. General anesthesia, or being asleep for your cesarean section, has risks for patients and babies and is usually reserved for emergencies.

Can my partner stay with me during my cesarean section?

Once your care team establishes that you are comfortable with the anesthesia, your support person will be brought into the OR to sit with you. In the unlikely event there is an emergency, your support person will be escorted out of the operating room, so the anesthesia team can focus on taking care of you.

Urinary Catheter

After the anesthesia is placed, you will be assisted into position and a urinary catheter will be placed to keep your bladder empty during the surgery. You will be numb from the anesthesia so you should not feel discomfort. The catheter will remain in place for 6-8 hours after the surgery.

Skin to Skin

Once the baby is born and has a quick assessment by the delivery team in the OR, we encourage skin to skin contact with your baby. You can start skin to skin in the operating room as long as there is a dedicated staff member to sit with you to ensure the safety of you and baby. Skin to skin contact is beneficial for you and your baby even if you are not breastfeeding. Once you are out of the operating room the baby can do skin to skin with your partner or family as well!

Post Operative Information

Recovery Room

The average length of time in the OR is around 60 minutes. Once surgery is over you will be brought back to the Recovery Room. You can expect to be there for around 2 hours before being transferred to the Postpartum floor. In the Recovery Room we will monitor your vital signs, pain level and ability to move around as the effects of anesthesia wear off.

You can remain skin to skin with your baby throughout this process and if you are breastfeeding, you will be able to initiate feeding at this time. If needed, a nurse can provide assistance as you'll still have some limited mobility.

We ask that visitors wait to see you and the baby until you've been transferred to the Postpartum floor. It's important to keep in mind that you may want to limit visitors overall as you've just had a major abdominal surgery and will need time to rest, recover and bond with your baby.

Nutrition

We recommend you start chewing gum right away after surgery while in the Recovery Room to help get your bowels moving again after surgery. **Please bring your favorite non mint type of gum with you!** You may also bring non mint hard candy to suck on if you do not like gum. We recommend non mint as high mint content can possibly decrease milk supply

You may eat and drink as soon as you feel you are ready after surgery. In addition to the gum, we will also be giving you medication to help your bowels get moving and prevent bloating.

Pain Management

The spinal anesthesia you will receive at the time of the surgery will continue to provide pain relief for approximately 12-18 hours. Some people may experience itching or nausea as a result of the spinal anesthesia. If you experience these side effects, we will provide medication to help treat them. You should not need any narcotic medication by mouth after birth. You will receive a scheduled non-narcotic medication every 6 hours after surgery. After the first 18 hours you may ask for a narcotic medication if you are having significant pain.

After major abdominal surgery, it is normal to feel some discomfort, especially when you are getting up and out of bed. Our goal is to keep your pain level between a 1-3 (out of 10), if you are experiencing a pain level of 4-6, it is important to ask for pain medication. The goal is for your pain threshold to never get above a 6.

Postpartum

Activity

It is helpful to gradually begin to get up and move soon after your surgery.

We recommend:

You sit up at the edge of the bed within 4 hours of surgery

You walk within 8 hours of surgery

You walk 4 times a day after your surgery

Your catheter will be removed 6-8 hours after surgery and after that you will walk to the bathroom with assistance from your nurse. It is important to get your catheter removed as soon as possible to increase your mobility and decrease risk of urinary infections.

During the first 2 weeks: We recommend you lift nothing heavier than the baby. You had major abdominal surgery and your body needs time to heal. We recommend you avoid any heavy housework or rapid movements. You may begin to drive after 2 weeks or sooner if you are not taking any narcotic pain medications and feel you could quickly slam on the breaks if needed.

After 2 weeks, you should listen to your body and gradually increase activity as much as able. We recommend you avoid any strenuous exercise until after 6 weeks postpartum.

Breastfeeding

If you chose to breastfeed, we want to support you and help you be successful. Our nursing staff is committed to helping you breastfeed and we also have lactation consultants on staff to help you with any challenges that may arise.

For the first few days after birth, you have a special milk called colostrum. Colostrum milk is very good for babies and helps protect their immune system. The regular breast milk usually comes in around 3-4 days after birth. The more you breastfeed, the faster the milk will come in. We recommend breastfeeding on demand at least every 3 hours until the baby is back up to their birth weight. The first two weeks are very important for establishing milk supply - we recommend trying to avoid giving formula in the first 2 weeks, even if you plan on giving both breast milk and formula later. The pediatric team at the hospital will discuss with you if there is a medical need for formula.

We recommend “rooming in” to help support healthy breastfeeding and bonding for all patients. This means keeping the baby in the room with you at all times even at night if possible. This is your opportunity to learn your baby’s cues while you have the support staff available to help if needed! A support person of your choice can stay with you in your postpartum room to help with the baby.

Follow Up

You are usually in the hospital 3-4 nights after your cesarean section. If you are doing well we are hopeful you will feel ready to leave on post-op day 3. You may need to stay longer if there are any complications or concerns.

You will make a follow up appointment with your midwife or doctor at 2 weeks and 6 weeks postpartum.

If you have any concerns when you get home, you can call your office number to reach someone to answer your question at any hour.

The number to call is: