

Having a planned caesarean section

Women's & Children's

Information for Patients

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It is normal to have some worries about the birth of your baby. This leaflet will help to take away some of your worries.

This leaflet will:

- Describe the steps in your caesarean section and enhanced recovery journey.
- Explain the steps that we take before and after your baby is born and until you are ready to go home. We expect you to be home 24 hours after delivery.
- Give you information about your elective caesarean section.
- Help you to understand the maternity enhanced recovery programme.

At University Hospitals of Leicester we are committed to giving you excellent care before, during and after your operation. The benefits of an Enhanced Recovery Programme are:

- Lower risk of problems after your operation.
- An earlier return to normal activities.

This leaflet will give you information on how you can help in your own recovery.

What is a caesarean section?

A caesarean section is a way of giving birth to your baby through a cut in your tummy.

We open your tummy and then your womb. We deliver your baby/babies along with the afterbirth (placenta).

Your womb is then stitched closed, followed by your tummy.

The operation usually takes 1 hour but can sometimes take longer.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What are the risks?

Here are some of the main risks of having a caesarean section:

- **Infection of the womb lining:** Symptoms include a fever, tummy pain, abnormal vaginal discharge and heavy vaginal bleeding. 6 in 100 people may get this.
- **Bleeding heavily:** You may need to have a blood transfusion in serious cases. You may need surgery to stop the bleeding. This is uncommon. 5 in 1,000 people may get this.
- **Deep vein thrombosis (DVT):** You could get a blood clot in your leg. This can cause pain and swelling. This could be very dangerous if it travels to the lungs (pulmonary embolism). This is rare. 4 to 16 in 10,000 people may get this.
- **Hysterectomy:** We may have to remove the womb. 7 to 8 in 1,000 people may have this.
- **Accidental damage to your bowel:** 1 to 4 in 1,000 people may have this.
- **Damage to your bladder or the tubes that connect the kidneys and bladder:** This is rare. 1 in 1,000 people may have this. You may need a surgery for this.
- **We may need admit you to the intensive care unit after your operation:** 9 in 1,000 people may need this.
- **More risk of your placenta covering the neck of your womb (cervix) in a future pregnancy:** 4 to 8 in 1,000 people may have this.

What are the risks to your baby?

- **A cut in the skin to your baby (common):** This may happen accidentally as your womb is opened. It is often a minor cut and heals without any problems. 1 to 2 in 100 people may have this.
- **Breathing difficulties (common):** This most often affects babies born before 39 weeks of pregnancy. This improves after a few days. We will monitor your baby closely in hospital.

Why might I need a planned caesarean section?

- If a vaginal birth risks being harmful to you or your baby. Your doctor or midwife will talk to you about this in the antenatal clinic.
- If you have chosen to have caesarean section.

Can my operation be cancelled?

Please know that the date for your operation could change at short notice due to busy periods. If this happens we will let you know a new date.

Sometimes we might have to change which hospital you will attend. We will let you know if this happens.

Sometimes we may need to cancel your caesarean section on the day of operation due to unexpected emergencies.

The week before your caesarean section

You will need to attend the pre-assessment clinic before your caesarean section. We will give you information about the following:

- **Blood test:** We will give you a date and time for when your blood will need to be taken. We will need to take them no more than 2 days before your caesarean section. If you do not have your bloods taken before coming into hospital, your caesarean section may be cancelled.
- **Antibacterial wash:** We will give you a bottle of antibacterial wash and a tube of antibiotic nose cream. This will reduce the amount of bacteria on your skin and in your nose. This will help reduce the risk of infection. Instructions on how and when to use these are given below and on the following page.
- **Swab:** We will take a swab from your nose and between the anus and vulva (perineum). This is to see if you have a bacteria called Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA). It takes 3 to 4 days to get the results. If you are carrying the bacteria, the hospital will let you know.
- **Carbohydrate drink:** At your appointment in the antenatal clinic you will also be given your pre-operative carbohydrate drinks (suitable for vegans).
- **Diabetes:** If you have Type 1 or Type 2 Diabetes or are on insulin for Gestational Diabetes, you will not be given the carbohydrate drinks. The drinks can cause high blood sugars, which are not good for you or your baby.
- **Medication for tummy acid called Omeprazole:** We will give you a medicine to reduce the acid in your tummy. These will make your anaesthetic safer.

2 days before your caesarean section

- Wash your body with the antibacterial wash **once a day**.
- Use the antibiotic nose cream **3 times a day** (morning, afternoon and night)

Continue to use both the body wash and nose cream until asked to stop by your midwife.

How to use the antibacterial wash:

1. Wash your body once a day.
2. Apply the antibacterial body wash directly to wet skin.
3. Rub into the skin paying special attention to skin creases, under arms and bump. The body wash does not make a foam.
4. Leave the body wash on your body for at least 30 seconds and then rinse off.
5. Dry your skin using a clean towel.

It is better to shower rather than bath if you can. You can use your own products on your body and hair **after** you have used the antibacterial wash.

Hair should be washed with antibacterial wash **2 times** during the week. Apply to wet hair leave for 30 seconds then rinse off.

On the day before your caesarean section

At 12pm (midday) take 2 Omeprazole tablets.

In the evening, if you are not diabetic you should eat a high carbohydrate evening meal like pasta, rice, potatoes, pizza.

If you are diabetic you should eat a normal meal to keep your blood sugars under control. Please follow the plan you have been given in the diabetic clinic for your insulin.

At 10pm you should have a snack. If you are diabetic, you should also have a snack at 10pm.

On the day of your caesarean section

Only **1 birth partner** will be with you on the day. If your birth partner wants to be with you in theatre, we will give them theatre clothing on the day.

- Please take your normal medication that you have been told to take. **Please take the last capsule of Omeprazole that you were given in clinic.** Take your medications with a small amount of water before you come into hospital. Please let the hospital team know what medication you have taken.
- If you have been taking Aspirin during the pregnancy to reduce the risk of pre-eclampsia, **do not take Aspirin on the day of your caesarean section.**
- If you are on **injections** to thin the blood, please make sure you know when to stop these before your caesarean section.
- Please do not wear any jewellery, make up, nail polish or fake nails when you come into hospital for your caesarean section. You should remove all piercings.
- Please minimise the number of valuables you bring with you to the hospital.

Remember to bring the these items with you to theatre arrivals:

- Any regular medication you are taking.
- A snack. You will be offered food and drink in recovery after your caesarean section. Please bring in a snack that you may feel like eating, like a sandwich and cereal bar.
- Warm clothing: a dressing gown and slippers. Staying warm is really important because it reduces your risk of developing infections and other complications.
- Baby clothes (vest, baby grow, hat).
- Nappies

Cameras: We are happy for you to take photographs of your baby in theatre. This can be on a mobile phone. Please set it to flight mode and do not take video footage. Video may be allowed in recovery.

We do have a locker for you to use. You will need a £1 coin (refundable). The locker is small and good for keeping valuables like purses, wallets, keys.

The hospital does not accept responsibility for any valuables lost or stolen. Please do leave non-essential jewellery, cash and credit/debit cards at home.

Please only bring in what you need for the caesarean section as there is limited space in recovery. We suggest you keep your main bag in the car, or ask someone to bring the rest in later.

You can find a helpful checklist at the end of this leaflet to help you prepare.

On arrival to the hospital:

Leicester Royal Infirmary Patients

On arrival please go to Maternity Reception on the Ground Floor of the Kensington Building by **7am**. You will be told to go to Level 1 Theatre Arrivals Lounge.

Leicester General Hospital Patients

If you are having your caesarean section at the Leicester General Hospital please arrive at the Labour Ward at 7am.

If your caesarean is booked for morning:

- You can eat and drink normally up until 2am on the morning of your operation.
- Do not chew gum or eat sweets after 2am.
- Between 2am and 6am you may drink plain water.
- At 6am you should drink 2 bottles of your carbohydrate drinks with your medication. This is only if you have been given them.
- After 6am you can continue to take small sips of plain water until you are called into theatre.

You should have a shower at home on the morning of your caesarean section using the antibacterial wash. Wash well between your groin and belly button. The midwife will clip the hair along the bikini line to make sure the area is clear. **Please do not wax or shave this area.** This may increase the risk of getting an infection. Please do not use creams or lotions on your tummy after your shower.

If your caesarean section is booked for the afternoon:

You should have a shower at home on the morning of your caesarean section using the antibacterial body wash. Wash well between your groin and belly button. Please do not use creams or lotions on your tummy after you shower. **Please do not wax or shave this area.**

- Please have a light breakfast, such as cereal or toast, before 6am.
- You can eat and drink normally up until 6am on the morning of your operation.
- Do not chew gum or eat sweets after 6am.
- Between 6am and 10am you may drink plain water.
- At 10am you should drink 2 bottles of your carbohydrate drinks. This is only if you have been given them.

All patients arriving for an elective caesarean section

A midwife will see you on arrival. An obstetrician will speak to you about the operation. An anaesthetist will speak to you about pain relief. Most people will have a spinal when they have an elective caesarean section.

What to expect after your caesarean section:

What is enhanced recovery?

When your caesarean section is finished, we will take you, your baby and your birth partner to the Recovery Area. If your caesarean went well, you will have enhanced recovery care. We will offer you food and drink in the Recovery Area. This is the time to eat the snack you have brought from home. Enhanced recovery can improve your recovery.

Traditional recovery care

You may not be able to have enhanced recovery. In this case you will have traditional recovery care. You will stay close to the theatre for a longer time after your caesarean section. You may also stay in hospital afterwards a little longer if you get traditional care.

Skin to skin with your baby

When you are in theatre and, the midwives say it is safe to do so, it is a good idea to cuddle your baby, with their skin next to yours. Your midwife will offer to check your baby. They will then help you to have skin to skin if this is something you would like to do. It will help to keep your baby warm. Your baby will also have a hat on and a blanket to cover them. You can carry on with skin to skin when you go into the recovery room. This will also encourage your baby to feed as soon as possible.

After a short time in recovery you will be taken to one of our postnatal wards for the rest of your recovery time.

Getting about after my caesarean section

6 hours after your caesarean section we will encourage you to walk around.

You will probably feel a little wobbly on your feet at first, but the midwifery staff will be there to support you. Getting up and out of bed is a very important step in your recovery. You are encouraged to have 3 short walks within 24 hours after your caesarean section.

You will need to avoid lifting heavy objects and twisting. Your tummy muscles will not work straight away. You may need to use your arms to push you up from lying down. Keeping active is important as it will also help to reduce the risk of blood clots in your legs after a caesarean section. Do not start any new activity, simple short walks is enough.

Pain after my caesarean section

Taking **regular pain relief** for the first few days to help you move around and care for your baby comfortably. We will give you regular pain relief. If you feel you need more pain relief, please ask a member of staff. It can take up to 20 to 30 minutes for the pain relief to work. The common pain relief we use include Paracetamol, Ibuprofen and Dihydrocodeine. In the hospital if you need more pain relief we may offer you Oral Morphine or Tramadol.

Feeding my baby after caesarean section

We encourage all babies to feed within **1 hour** of being born. Your midwife will support you in the recovery room to feed your baby. It is a personal choice of how you want to feed your baby. Support will be available for both breastfeeding and bottle feeding.

Wound care

Looking after your wound is important to reduce the risk of infection. In theatre, the doctors will place a dressing over your caesarean wound. This will be regularly checked by the midwives and nurses to check for any bleeding. The midwives will let you know when to remove this dressing. Normally this is the day after your operation. This lets the midwife to check your wound for signs of infection.

Keeping your wound clean and dry will help to reduce infection. Shower at least once a day to keep your wound clean. Do not touch the wound unless you have washed your hands. A midwife will offer to check your caesarean section wound every time they see you. This is to monitor for infection.

If you notice any of the following signs of infection, contact your midwife as soon as you can for a check:

- **Bleeding or oozing from the wound**
- **Swelling around the wound**
- **Your skin is hot to touch or is red in colour**
- **You notice any offensive smell**

Treating an infection early is really important so if you are worried, please contact your midwife.

Contact a health professional if you have:

- **Noticed any infection signs as detailed above.**
- **Noticed significant swelling to your feet or ankles, or any pain in your calves.**
- **Been feeling generally unwell**
- **Any concerns**

How long will I stay in hospital after my caesarean section?

If all is well with your caesarean section you will be discharged home the next day.

Your baby may need regular checks if:

- They were born before 39 weeks of pregnancy
- You had diabetes or high blood pressure
- Any problems at birth

These checks may include:

- Heart rate
- Breathing rate
- Temperature
- Oxygen levels
- Blood sugars

These checks normally take 12 to 24 hours to complete and may delay you going home.

Longer stays will be planned as needed. We know that the enhanced recovery process benefits the healing process for all people, even though not everybody will go home the next day.

Ward information

Visiting hours can change. Your midwife will let know of the timings. During your minimum 4 hours Enhanced Recovery period it is only your **1 birth partner** who is allowed to be with you.

Please make sure your visitors are mindful of the fact that some people in the Enhanced Recovery Bay may have only recently arrived out of Theatre Recovery. We ask you to keep visitors to a minimum and ask that they only stay for short periods only. Rest and sleep are important to help your recovery.

You will play an active part in your recovery by:

- Following a healthy diet plan before you come into hospital. This will help your wound healing and energy levels after your caesarean section.
- Sitting out of bed 6 hours after your caesarean section. This will help reduce the risk of nausea or vomiting. The hospital staff will help you with this.
- Taking regular walks around the ward and when you go home. This will reduce the risk of chest infections and blood clots.
- We will give you more information about your after care at home before your discharge from hospital.

Going home

For the 7 days after your caesarean section, you will need a daily injection of Enoxaparin (a blood thinner). This is to reduce your risk of developing blood clots. You will be asked to continue to inject this to yourself at home. The midwives on the ward will show you how to give this injection to yourself.

Make sure you have enough supplies of pain relieving medication such as Paracetamol and Ibuprofen at home as these are not given on discharge from hospital. Stronger pain relief will be given to you to take home with instructions on how and when to take it.

When can I return to normal activities?

Everyone is different and individual recovery is different. You can begin normal activities such as walking and gentle exercise. This will help you to recover following your caesarean section. Other activities such as carrying anything heavy or doing housework such as vacuuming should only be done when you feel ready to do so. This can be up to 6 weeks after your caesarean.

Checklist

- Date of caesarean section
- Date for Pre Clerking Clinic
- Date for Blood tests
- Medication

What to bring with you to the hospital

Please be mindful when packing your hospital bag that there is limited space.

Into theatre Arrivals

For you

- Dressing gown
- Slippers
- Contact glasses / contact lens case
- Camera / mobile phone
- Snack
- £1 coin for locker
- Change for the car park

For baby

- Vests
- Baby grows
- Hat
- Nappies (around 6 per day)
- Cotton wool or wipes

On the ward

- Night clothes
- Wash bag and toiletries
- Maternity pads
- Towel
- Clothes for going home
- Phone charger
- If you plan to bottle feed, please do not bring powdered milk to the hospital as we are not able to make up powdered feeds at the hospital. Starter packs are good but are not very economical. Please bring ready made formula.
- Cotton wool or wipes



Contact Details

Theatre co-ordinator (Monday to Friday 9am to 2pm): 0796 088 3606

Leicester Royal Infirmary

LE1 5WW

Tel: 0330 303 1573

Switchboard Fax: 0116 258 7565

Infirmery Square

Ward 5 (Open everyday 24 hours a day): 0116 258 6409

Ward 6 (Open everyday 24 hours a day): 0116 258 7615

Delivery Suite (Open everyday 24 hours a day): 0116 258 6451

Leicester General Hospital

Gwendolen Road

Leicester

LE5 4PW

Tel: 0300 303 1573

Labour Ward (Open everyday 24 hours a day): 0116 258 4807

Ward 30 (Open everyday 24 hours a day): 0116 258 4843

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk