

Cesarean Section (C-Section)

As you prepare for your C-Section, please take a few minutes to read this booklet. It tells about what you can expect before, during and after your surgery. For other concerns, talk with your doctor or call the Labor and Delivery Unit at (312) 926-7600.

Before Surgery

About a week before surgery, please pre-register by calling our Admitting Department at (312) 926-7581. You may also register online at www.nmh.org/maternity. Be sure to have your medical insurance information available.

Please ask

If you take any medicines, check with your doctor to see if you should take it prior to and on the day of your surgery. **Diabetics need specific instructions about the use of oral medicines and insulin.**

your doctor

The day before your surgery, a staff member from the Labor and Delivery unit will call to confirm your arrival time and answer any questions. Most often, check-in is two hours before your scheduled C-Section.

or nurse

Do not eat or drink anything for six hours before to your C-Section. If your C-Section is scheduled for 3 p.m., you may have a light breakfast before 9 a.m. Then do not eat or drink after that time. As instructed by your doctor, you may take any needed medicines with sips of water, just enough to swallow the pills.

if you have

any questions.

Make-up, nail polish, hairpins, false eyelashes, contact lenses, hearing aids, dentures, hairpieces and jewelry cannot be worn during surgery. Your family may keep your jewelry and wallet or purse. Other valuables should be left at home. Please bring your insurance information with you.

Be sure to bring a camera for the big event!

Parking

Labor and Delivery is located on the 5th floor of Prentice Women's Hospital, 333 East Superior Street. Valet parking is available at Prentice. You will receive a ticket when you arrive. The ticket can be validated at any time at the Information Desk on the 1st floor of Prentice Women's Hospital. Discount parking is located at the Superior, Huron, and St. Clair Street garage. Stop at the Information Desk on the first floor of Prentice for parking vouchers.

Arrival

Come to the fifth floor of Prentice Women's Hospital to check in. A secretary will greet you and ask you a few basic questions. A nurse will escort you to your room. After changing into a hospital gown, you are asked to give a urine sample. Your blood pressure and pulse are checked and your nurse reviews your health history. An IV (into the vein) line is placed in your arm or hand. A fetal monitor is used for 20- 30 minutes to check the baby's heart rate.

An anesthesiologist, a specially trained doctor, visits you to review your medical history, discuss the type of anesthetic to be used, and answer any questions you have. (Anesthetic agents are used to ease any pain or discomfort.) Your doctor or the resident explains the C-Section and answers any questions. You are asked to sign consent forms for both anesthesia and the surgery.

Just before surgery, glasses, jewelry, contact lenses, hearing aids, dentures and hairpieces are removed. Visitors are directed to the waiting area. Your partner will change into "scrubs" to wear during the surgery if you are having spinal or epidural anesthesia. After you leave to go to the operating room (OR), your partner is asked to wait for about 20 to 30 minutes while you are being prepared for surgery. Once you are ready, your partner can join you in the OR. (Only one person can be with you during your surgery.)

Don't forget your camera!

Visitors

The family waiting room is located on the fourth floor. The phone number for the waiting room is (312) 926-3456 and the room number is 475. All of your visitors (except for your partner) are asked to wait here during your surgery. After you leave the OR, your partner can advise your visitors of the birth. They can see you and your new baby **one at a time** while you are in the Recovery Room. (For their own safety, children under the age of 12 may not visit at this time.) The staff may have to ask visitors to leave the Recovery Room for short periods to care for you or other patients.

During Surgery

Most women receive spinal or epidural anesthesia, which allows you to be awake for the birth of your baby. After a numbing medicine is injected, you may feel pressure and touch but no pain. (If a spinal is used, the area from your waist to your toes is affected. Sensation returns in a few hours.) After you receive your anesthesia, you are positioned for your surgery. At this time your lower abdomen is shaved and a tube (catheter) is inserted to drain your urine. You are covered with sheets and your partner is escorted to the OR and positioned at the head of your bed.

The doctor makes two incisions, one in your abdomen and the second to open the uterus to deliver the baby. After the baby is born, the doctor holds the infant up for you to see. Then the nurse will ask your partner to come over to see the baby.

This is picture time!

After Surgery

Your C-Section takes about one hour. Then you go to the Recovery Room with your baby in your arms and your partner at your side. You are checked often to:

- assure your comfort,
- control any pain you may have,
- assess postpartum bleeding.

Identification bands are placed on you, your baby and your partner at this time. While in the Recovery Room, you are given the chance to breastfeed. Your nurse can assist you as needed.

Your partner may want to telephone family or friends. This is a good time for your partner to leave the area and allow others to visit with you (as only one visitor at a time is allowed in the Recovery Room).

After about two hours, you are then escorted to your postpartum room.

Postpartum Care

Once in your room, the nurse takes your blood pressure, pulse and temperature and checks your vaginal bleeding. As needed, medicine is given for pain or discomfort. Do not wait until you are too uncomfortable before asking for pain medicine. The urine catheter, inserted before surgery, remains in place until the next morning. The IV may be in place for 1 or 2 days.

Your obstetrician oversees your care while the pediatrician you have selected directs the care of your baby. (If you choose, your obstetrician can perform your baby's circumcision during your hospital stay.)

Your diet may begin with liquids and progress to a regular diet. Deep breathing, coughing, turning, and walking in the hall help:

- speed your recovery,
- improve circulation,
- promote healing,
- prevent complications.

Most patients are out of bed on the same day as surgery. Your nurse will assist you with getting out of bed and walking. The first time do not try this alone.

During your 3 to 4 day stay on the Postpartum Unit, up to four family members at a time may visit. (Only your own children may visit. Any other children, such as nieces and nephews must be over the age of 12.)

Please carefully review the Prentice guide, *You & Your New Baby*. And write down any questions for your doctor or nurse.

You will be ready for discharge on the third or fourth day after your C-Section. The discharge time is 11 a.m. Please arrange to depart from the hospital by 11 a.m. that day.

Your doctor and nurse will review discharge instructions for you and your new baby. The booklet, *You & Your New Baby* also provides important information. The Alberto-Culver Women's Health Center located on the first floor of Prentice is another information resource for you after discharge.

At Home

Be sure to follow your doctor's instructions and the guidelines found below to help you recover from your C-Section. Please refer to Prentice guide, *You & Your New Baby* for added information.

Rest as much as possible; nap when the baby does. Do not lift anything heavier than your baby. Gradually increase your activity. Rest if you get tired. Try to get a good night's sleep. Taking pain medicine at bedtime may be helpful if it is difficult to get in a comfortable sleeping position.

Driving

Do not exercise or drive without checking with your doctor or midwife. Do not drive after taking narcotic pain medicine.

Diet

You may resume your normal diet. Taking extra fluids helps prevent constipation. If you are breastfeeding (or providing breast milk for your baby), do not drink any alcohol. If you are taking narcotic pain medicine, do not drink any alcohol.

Bathing

You may shower or bathe as long as your incision edges are not open. Use a mild soap to gently clean your incision and carefully pat it dry.

Incision

You may note discomfort from the incision and muscle aches. Getting up and moving about can ease some of the discomfort. Brace your incision with a pillow when coughing or sneezing. Keep your incision clean and dry. Wear cotton panties. (There is no need to cover the incision site.) You may have small Steri-Strips (little white pieces of tape) on your incision. Do not remove these strips. These offer extra support while your incision heals. They will slowly curl up and fall off or your doctor may remove them at your visit.

Sexual Activity

Check with your doctor before resuming sexual activity. Often, after 4-6 weeks, if you feel good and are well rested, sexual activity may be resumed. Avoid positions that strain the incision site. Keep in mind that breastfeeding is not a form of birth control.

When to Call the Doctor

Inspect your incision daily for signs of infection. Contact your doctor if you note any of the following:

- Temperature over 100.4° F
- Drainage or fluid from the incision that may be foul-smelling
- Increased tenderness or soreness at the wound
- The wound edges are no longer together
- Redness or swelling at the wound site.

Doctor s Appointments

Follow-up doctor's visits are important after you leave the hospital. Generally, your doctor will want to see you in 2-3 weeks. Before your discharge, you will receive more information about your follow-up visits.

Congratulations and Good Luck with your new baby!

*Developed by
Labor and Delivery Unit*