

Preparing for your Cesarean Birth

Information for women and their partners



This pamphlet is to provide information to you and your family on what to expect the day of your caesarean birth. We hope that this will help to prevent delays in your care and offer you the most positive experience possible. Please review this pamphlet carefully and bring it with you on the day of your surgery.

Your caesarean birth is planned for:

Date: _____

Time of arrival at the hospital: _____

To prepare for your surgery, please do the following only if your doctor asks you to:

Attend your appointment with the anesthesia clinic (pain medication) before your surgery. (This will be requested by your doctor. Not all patients are seen by anesthesia.)

Have a blood test at the hospital 2 hours before your surgery. (Only if specially requested by your doctor.)

- CBC
- Coagulation profile
- Pre-eclampsia profile
- Crossmatch ____ units PRBC
- Other, please specify: _____

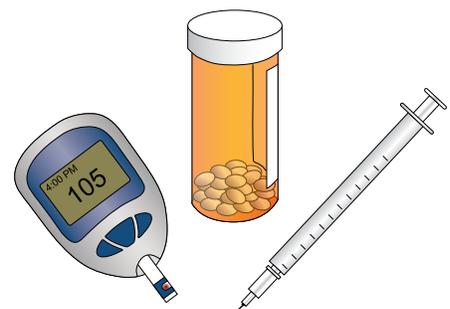
Between 12 and 36 weeks of pregnancy

As soon as possible, visit the Admitting Department on C06.1250 (Pavilion C 6th floor, South elevators)- open between 7 am and 3 pm. You will need your Medicare card and hospital card. You will receive the "From Tiny Tot to Toddler" guide.



1 week before surgery

If you are diabetic, ask your doctor when you should take your last dose of insulin before surgery.



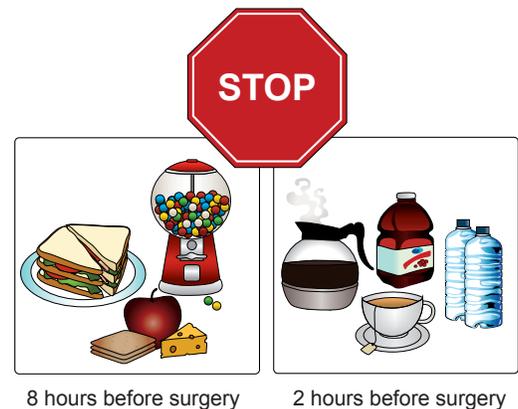
The day before surgery

- Remove any make-up, nail polish (hands and feet), false eye-lashes and body-piercing jewelry (including tongue stud). Please note that hairpieces and hearing aids cannot be worn during surgery.
- Do **not** shave your belly. The triage nurse will let you know if this is necessary.
- If you are doing a private cord blood collection, open the box, read the instructions carefully and complete as much information as you can. Do not open the collection pouch. Bring the box with you on the day of your surgery.



On the day of surgery

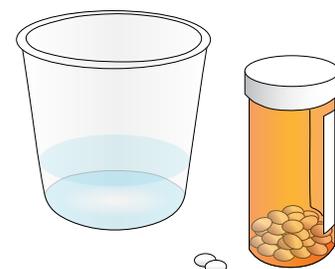
- **Do not eat anything for 8 hours before your scheduled surgery time.** This includes gum and hard candy.
- You may drink water, apple juice, black coffee or tea (**no milk**) up to 2 hours before surgery. You should not drink anything at all for 2 hours before your surgery.



- If you eat or have milk products during this time, your surgery will be delayed.



- As instructed by your doctor, you may take needed medications with sips of water, just enough to swallow the pills.



What to bring to the hospital



- This pamphlet



- If you wear glasses, contact lenses, a hearing aid or dentures, please bring the appropriate containers with your name on them. You will have to remove your contact lenses before your surgery.



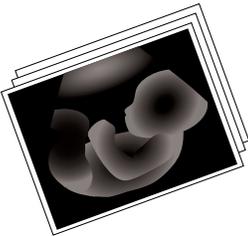
- Your Medicare card and hospital card



- Your Medical insurance information (if applicable)



- Toiletries and other personal items for you and baby (sanitary pads, diapers, a pillow, baby clothes)



- A copy of your ultrasound reports and blood tests if they were not done at the hospital



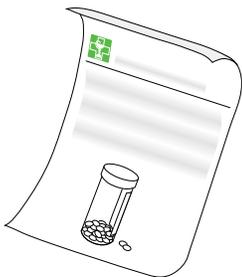
- A baby car seat



- A list of your allergies



- A camera (during surgery, you can take pictures of your baby, but not of the surgery itself.)



- A list of your current medications (including insulin orders)



- Private cord blood collection box (if applicable)

Please leave all valuables at home (jewelry, money). The hospital is not responsible for any lost or stolen articles.



We suggest that you limit the items you bring to the Birthing Centre. This will decrease the need to transport items when you move to the Postpartum Unit. You may ask your family or friends to bring your belongings to your postpartum room after your surgery. You may also leave them in your car and have someone bring them later.

Arrival

At least 2 hours before your scheduled surgery, go to the Obstetrics Admission booth in C06.1250 and tell them you are scheduled for a cesarean section. They will give you papers to bring to the Birthing Centre.

Once you have these papers, continue to the Birthing Centre triage and give your papers to the triage nurse.

You will stay in triage (the waiting area) where the staff will prepare you for your scheduled surgery.

Please note that other emergency surgeries may delay the time of your surgery.



In triage

Your nurse will:

- Ask you to change into a hospital gown and put on compression stockings (if necessary)
- Review your health history
- Listen to your baby's heart rate with a fetal monitor
- Take your blood pressure, temperature and pulse
- Do a blood test (if necessary)
- Put an IV tube in your vein
- Trim hair on the area above your bikini line
- Ask your partner or support person to change into hospital clothes for the operating room (OR)



An obstetrics doctor and an anesthesia doctor will:

- Review your medical history
- Explain the process and risks of your surgery
- Discuss the type of pain-relief medicine (anesthesia) that will be used in your surgery
- Answer any questions you may have
- Have you sign a consent form for anesthesia, for the surgery and for blood transfusions in case of emergency

During your surgery

The anesthesia doctor will give you a numbing medication in your back (spinal epidural) so you do not feel pain during your surgery. Then the doctor will clean your abdomen, insert a tube (catheter) in your bladder to drain the urine, and cover you with sterile sheets.

At this time your partner will be able to come into the OR and sit with you at the head of the bed. If you are asleep during surgery (general anesthesia), your partner will wait for you in the recovery room.

The doctor brings your baby to a special bed to be dried, assessed and weighed. Matching identification bands are placed on you, your baby and your partner.

If the baby is well and the situation permits it, the nurse will place the baby on your chest (skin-to-skin contact). Your partner will assist you to hold the baby. This helps to:

- Keep your baby warm, stabilize your baby's breathing, heart rate and blood sugar
- Encourage breastfeeding, promote mother/infant bonding

Skin-to-skin contact can be done by your partner if you are not able to do it.



After your surgery

Your cesarean birth takes about 1 hour. You and your baby are then taken to the Recovery Room. Your partner or support person may be with you at this time. If your recovery needs to happen on another floor, your partner or support person, and baby will go to the postpartum unit until you can join them.

There you and your baby are cared for and closely monitored. The nurse checks you to:

- Keep you comfortable
- Help control any pain you may have

If skin-to-skin contact was not possible during surgery, it can be started at this time. You will also have a chance to start feeding your baby. The nurse can help you. After about 2 hours, you will be brought to your postpartum room.

Postpartum care

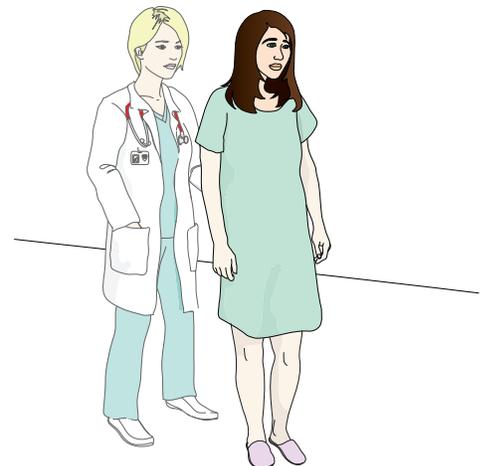
Once in your postpartum room, the nurse will check your blood pressure, pulse, breathing and temperature. She will also check your incision (cut) and vaginal bleeding. As needed, you will take medicine for pain or discomfort. Remember that good pain relief is important for your recovery. Very few medications affect breast milk. It is safe to continue breastfeeding while taking your prescribed medications for pain.

You may resume a regular diet as soon as you are hungry, unless you were asleep (general anesthesia). If you were asleep, your postpartum nurse will discuss your diet with you.

Most patients are out of bed on the same day of surgery. A team member will assist you in getting out of bed and walking. Do not try this alone the first time as there is a risk for falling. Deep breathing, coughing, turning in bed, and walking in the hall help:

- Speed your recovery
- Promote healing
- Improve circulation
- Prevent complications

The urine catheter put in before surgery remains in place for 12-24 hours after surgery. The IV may be in place for a few hours up to 2 days. If you have staples, your nurse will remove these before you leave the hospital, unless prescribed otherwise.



Visitors

During your stay in the postpartum unit, your new baby's siblings may visit at any time. All other visitors, up to 2 at a time, may come between 6 and 8 pm. No other children under the age of 12 (other than the siblings) are allowed. Children must be supervised by another adult at all times. Discharge time is 11 am, 2 or 3 days after your surgery, unless your doctor decides otherwise. You may call your doctor for a routine post-partum appointment 6 weeks after delivery.

For more information, please call us at any time:

MUHC GLEN Royal Victoria Hospital
1001 Decarie Boulevard
Montreal, QC H4A 3J1
514-934-1934 ext 31592



Content developed by the MUHC Royal Victoria Hospital Birthing Centre staff. Design, layout, and images developed by the MUHC Patient Education Office
Revised and Approved 3 July 2015
Next Revision: 3 July 2019

Help support the MUHC Patient Education Office! Donations make a huge difference. Call the Montreal General Hospital Foundation to donate: **514-934-8230** or log on to **www.mghfoundation.com**

© Copyright 3 July 2015, Decembre 2014, McGill University Health Centre. 2nd edition.
Reproduction in whole or in part without express written permission from patienteducation@muhc.mcgill.ca is prohibited.



IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ

Information provided by this booklet is for educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice or instruction of a professional health care practitioner, or to substitute medical care. Contact a qualified health care practitioner if you have any questions concerning your care.

