

Elective caesarean section

Patient information leaflet

Congratulations on your imminent arrival. We look forward to taking care of you and your baby.

Prior to your surgery you will be called to check if you or any members of your household have a cough, fever, or 'flu-like' symptoms, suggesting possible Covid 19 infection. If you do have any symptoms, your caesarean section will not be cancelled, but we will be able to make preparations to keep you and our other women as safe as possible.

Partners: one consistent partner, with **no symptoms** of Covid 19, will be allowed to join you for the birth and throughout your stay. If your partner is unable to come, you are able to bring another person, but during these unprecedented times only the one birth partner will be allowed in the hospital with you – all other visitors will be denied entry. This is for the safety of all our mothers and babies.



Before surgery you will:

- Talk to a doctor who will explain the risks and benefits of surgery
- Have routine MRSA swabs (from your groin and nostril) taken at least 2 weeks prior
- Have routine blood tests 1-2 days prior
- Collect tablets from pharmacy- 2 tablets of the antacid Omeprazole (this is to reduce stomach acid and does not harm the baby).

Preparing for surgery

- Continue antenatal exercise
- Try to stop or cut back on smoking
- Bring 1 overnight bag with essential items including sanitary towels for you and formula milk for your baby if you plan to bottle feed
- Please take off any makeup, fragrances, nail polish, false nails and body jewellery.

FOR MORNING SURGERY:

- You will have been asked to attend the Labour Ward reception at **7 AM** or **10AM**.
- **07:00 AM** admission: You should not have anything to eat after 2 AM. You may have a late evening snack and drink before going to bed. Take one omeprazole tablet at 6pm the night before and at 6am on the day of the operation, with a large glass of water, black tea or black coffee.
- **10:00 AM** admission: You should not have anything to eat after 4 AM. You may have a late evening snack and drink before going to bed. Take one omeprazole tablet at 8pm the night before and the second at 8am on the day of the operation, with a large glass of water, black tea or black coffee.

FOR AFTERNOON SURGERY:

You will have been asked to attend the Labour Ward reception at **12:00 PM**. You should not have anything to eat after 7AM. You may have a light breakfast such as tea and toast at 7 AM. Take one omeprazole tablet at 10 pm the night before and at 11 am on the day of your operation, with a large glass of water, black tea or black coffee.

On admission you will:

- Meet the midwife, obstetric doctor and anaesthetic doctor
 - Change into a hospital gown
 - Have observations (pulse, temperature, blood pressure) checked
 - Have your baby's heart rate checked
 - Have a bikini line shave if needed
 - Be given elastic stockings (these help prevent blood clots).
 - Discuss contraception
- Your partner will change into hospital scrubs

Anaesthesia

- Most women have an epidural or spinal anaesthesia (injection in the back).
- You will feel touch but no pain and only the lower body becomes numb.
- Your anaesthetist will discuss this with you.

Contraception

If you plan to have the coil (mirena) inserted as contraception at the time of your caesarean, please let the team know prior to commencing surgery. We can also prescribe you the progesterone only pill for you to take home with you, reducing your need to go to your GP.

During the procedure

Staff: There are several members of staff in the theatre each with a specific role in taking care of you.

Anaesthetic: the anaesthetist will insert a cannula (a small plastic tube) in your hand, followed by the epidural or spinal in your back.

Catheter: once the anaesthesia is working the midwife will pass a catheter (a small tube) into your bladder. This will keep your bladder empty during the surgery and afterwards whilst the spinal is wearing off. The catheter will be taken out within about 12 hours of the operation.

The operation: you will see the surgeons clean your tummy and then a drape will be placed so you will not be able to see the operation being performed. The operation will take about 1 hour. We encourage delayed cord-clamping and support skin to skin with your baby in theatre. You will then be moved to the recovery area for another hour and then to the postnatal ward. Your cannula may be removed once you start eating and drinking. Your baby will be by your bed at all times unless he/she requires admission to neonatal unit.

After the operation:

Food: You may eat and drink. Chewing gum may help. Avoid greasy foods. Meals are provided during your stay in hospital.

Pain relief: You will be given pain relief including paracetamol, ibuprofen, dihydrocodeine and morphine. You will also be given pain relief to take home.

Practical tips: Try non-medical pain relieving methods like distracting yourself by reading /listening to music or by trying to relax and use deep breathing exercises. Getting out of bed as soon as possible will help you recover more quickly. It will be uncomfortable to start with, but pain medication should allow you to move comfortably.

Blood tests: you will have a blood test before discharge to check for anaemia (low blood count).

Prior to discharge: all checks for you and your baby need to be completed before you leave.

Going home:

Pain relief: you will be given pain relief to take home

Preventing blood clots: moving around after surgery and keeping well hydrated reduces your risk of developing blood clots. You will be given injections while in hospital and may be given medication to go home with. If this is the case you will be shown how to give this to yourself and will be given the full supply when you leave hospital.

OUR AIM IS TO DISCHARGE YOU AS SOON AS WE FEEL THAT YOU ARE MEDICALLY FIT AND SAFE TO BE DISCHARGED

**CONTACT DETAILS:
Tel.: 0207 288 5249**

