

Your Recovery After Cesarean Birth

Part 1



After you give birth, a nurse will check you and answer any questions you may have. During your stay, the nurses will teach you how to care for yourself and your baby.

Changes in Your Body

- A nurse will feel your abdomen to check your uterus while you are in the hospital. If your uterus is soft, your nurse will rub your abdomen to help the uterus become firm.

- You will have bleeding from your vagina for 2 to 4 weeks. During the first few days, the bleeding is like a heavy menstrual period. You may pass small blood clots. The bleeding will decrease and change to pink, dark brown, and then clear.

Do not use tampons. Use sanitary pads.



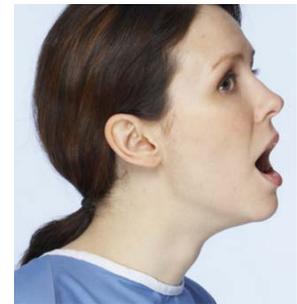
- Your breasts will fill with milk 3 to 5 days after you give birth and become firm and sore. They may leak at times.

- You may have constipation. A stool softener or laxative may be ordered.

- Tell your nurse if you have problems urinating.

Activity

- Deep breathe and cough every two hours to prevent breathing problems. Hold a pillow or folded blanket over your incision when you cough to lessen the pain.



- **Ask the staff for help the first few times you get out of bed.**

- Sit up for a couple of minutes before you start to walk.



- If you feel light headed or dizzy while in the bathroom, **pull the emergency call light on the bathroom wall for help.**

- Walk in the hallways 3 to 4 times a day for 5 to 10 minutes.

Diet

You may feel tired and hungry. You will get fluids through an IV (intravenous) in your hand or arm until you are drinking well. The day of surgery, you will be able to have ice chips or clear fluids. As your bowel function returns, you will be given fluids, then solid food.

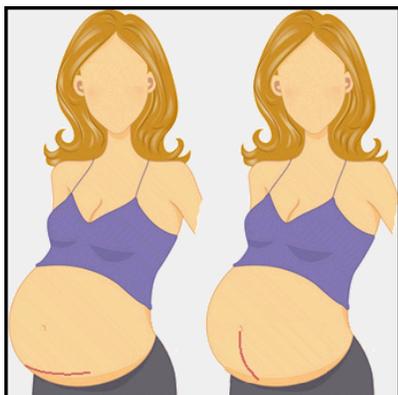
Pain Control

Pain is normal. It is the most intense the first 2-3 days after surgery. Your doctor will order



pain medicine for you. **Ask for pain medicine when you need it.** The medicine may not get rid of your pain, but it will make it better. Manage your pain so you can care for yourself, your baby and be active.

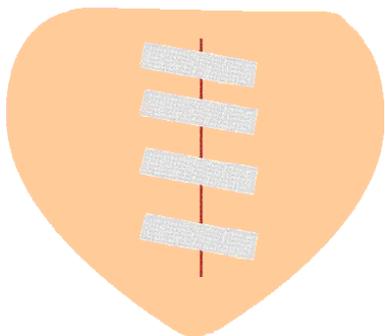
Incision



Your incision may be up and down (vertical) or across the lower part of your abdomen (horizontal). A dressing will be placed

over the incision for about 24 hours. Your nurse will check the dressing and change it as needed. After the dressing is taken off, you may shower.

Tapes called steri strips will be placed over the incision. They will fall off on their own. **Do not** pull them off. You may trim the edges as they curl. Your nurse will show you how to care for your incision before you go home. Watch your incision for signs of infection such as redness, swelling, pain, warmth and drainage.



Text adapted from materials produced by Health Information Translations (www.healthinfotranslations.com). This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us>

A **Healthy Roads Media** project
www.healthyroadsmedia.org
English - Your Recovery After Cesarean Birth (Part 1)
Last reviewed 2012