

Elective Cesarean Section (C-Section)

Yarmouth Regional Hospital

Elective Cesarean Section (C-Section)

What is a cesarean section (c-section)?

- A c-section is a surgery done to deliver a baby through incisions (cuts) in your abdominal (belly) wall and uterus (womb). You and your obstetrician (a doctor who cares for pregnant people before, during, and after birth) will decide together if an elective (by choice) c-section is right for you.
- You may choose to have an elective c-section because:
 - › you have had a c-section before
 - › the baby is in a breech (feet or bum first) or transverse (sideways) position
 - › you have placenta previa (when the placenta sits too low in the uterus and covers the cervix [the opening to your uterus])
 - › you are having twins
- You will be asked to sign a consent form to show that you understand and agree to the surgery. The consent form is usually signed in your doctor's office or in the Labour and Delivery Unit.
- Your doctor's office or hospital nursing staff will give you the date and time of your surgery.
- You will need to have blood work done a few days before your surgery. Please bring your provincial health card and your prenatal records with you.

The night before your surgery

After midnight

- **Do not eat any food, including gum or candy.**
- **Do not have any milk products** (like milk, yogurt, ice cream).
- **Do not drink pop.**
- **You may drink clear liquids until 4 hours before your surgery.** Clear liquids include:
 - › Water
 - › Pulp-free juice (like apple or cranberry juice, **not orange juice**)
 - › Sports drinks
 - › Black or green tea
 - › Coffee (**without milk or cream**)

- Bacteria (germs that live on your body) can cause infection. Sleeping “clean” before your surgery can lower your chance of infection. Sleeping clean means:
 - › Showering well, cleaning your entire body, and shampooing your hair
 - › Wearing clean pyjamas
 - › Changing your bed sheets
 - › **Do not** let your pets sleep with you
- You may be asked to take medications to lower acid reflux (heartburn) the night before and morning of your surgery.
- If you are taking any other medication(s), your doctor will tell you if you should take it on the day of your surgery.
- Please remove all jewelry, including toe rings, at home. You must remove any item used to pierce ANY body part (like the nose, belly button, tongue, face, or ear).
- **Do not** wear makeup, nail polish, or gel nails to the hospital.
- Arrive about 2 hours before your surgery and register in the Admitting Department in the main lobby. After you register, go to the Labour and Delivery Unit on the 2nd floor.
- A nurse will help you get ready for surgery. They will:
 - › Fill out a nursing admission form
 - › Measure your height and weight
 - › Check your vital signs (blood pressure, temperature, and your baby’s heart rate)
 - › Answer any questions you have
- Before you go to the operating room (O.R.), you will need a catheter (a thin, hollow tube) put into your bladder to drain urine (pee). The catheter usually stays in place until the next morning.
- A nurse will go with you to the O.R.

Types of anesthesia

- Anesthesia is medication to relax you and stop you from feeling pain during surgery.
- Spinal anesthesia (a needle is used to inject numbing medication in the space around your spine to block pain) is used most often for c-sections. You will be awake during the surgery and you will be able to see your baby right away after they are born. When you have a spinal anesthetic, you can bring 1 support person into the O.R. with you.

- If you have a general anesthetic, you will be sleeping during the surgery. **When you have a general anesthetic, a support person cannot come into the O.R. with you.**
- The anesthetist (a doctor who gives you anesthesia for surgery) will talk with you to help you decide what anesthesia is best for you and your baby.

After your baby is born

- The nurse will check your baby. If you and your baby are stable (do not have any problems), you may choose to have your baby placed skin-to-skin on your chest while you are in the O.R.
- The nurse will go with you and your baby to the recovery room. Your support person can stay with you, if you wish. You will keep holding your baby and we will help you start breast or chestfeeding, if you wish.
- If you had a general anesthetic, we will bring your baby to the Women and Children's Health Unit until you are fully awake. Your support person can go with your baby to do skin-to-skin, if they wish. We will bring your baby to you in the recovery room when you are fully awake.
- You may have 1 support person stay overnight with you.

When you are home, call your surgeon right away if you have:

- Fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F) or chills for more than 24 hours (1 day)
- More swelling, redness, or warmth around the incision
- More drainage or a bad smell from the incision
- Pass blood clots bigger than the size of a golf ball (smaller clots are normal)

If you cannot reach your surgeon, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

If you have any questions or concerns before your surgery, please call the Labour and Delivery Unit at Yarmouth Regional Hospital.

› Phone: 902-746-1130

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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