

Care after a cesarean section



After a cesarean section, recovery can be challenging. This is because the mother will be recovering from major abdominal surgery while dealing with postpartum changes such as breast engorgement, mood swings, and postpartum bleeding. In addition, she will be caring for the baby and adjusting to the new stage of her life. The mother may need support to care for herself and her newborn, so don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it.

How long does recovery take after a cesarean section?

A cesarean section is a major surgery, so it requires a postoperative recovery time of 2 to 4 days. After discharge, the mother will be able to go home, where she will need to take special care of herself for at least 40 days, with the first week being the most critical. The recovery period is different for each mother. This time will depend on her lifestyle, overall health, and the outcome of her pregnancy.

What to expect when leaving the hospital?

After a cesarean section, it is normal to experience:

- Vaginal bleeding for up to 6 weeks. Which will slowly turn less red.
- At first, the wound will be slightly raised and pink in color.
- The pain should decrease after 2 to 3 days, but the cut will remain tender for 3 weeks or longer.
- Over time, the scar will become thinner, flatter, and turn either white or the color of your skin.
- The mother will need an appointment with her doctor in 4 to 6 weeks.



What are the care requirements?

Some of the care after a cesarean section are:

- Change the bandage covering your incision once a day or sooner if it gets dirty or wet. Your doctor will tell you when to stop keeping your wound covered.
- Wash only with soap and water. No need to rub it. Let the water run over the wound.
- Do not soak in a bathtub until your doctor tells you to.
- If surgical tapes (*Steri-Strips*) were used to close the incision:
 - Do not attempt to remove the tapes with water.
 - Wash and pat your incision dry with a clean towel. These should fall off in about a week.



When to call the doctor?

If you notice the following when checking your incision, contact your doctor:



- The incision remains red, swollen, or discharges.
- Vaginal bleeding is very heavy for more than 4 days.
- One leg is swollen.
- Abdominal pain is increasing.
- A fever persists.

Activities after cesarean section:

- Taking short walks can help with healing and prevent complications, such as blood



- clots. Start slowly and increase activity gradually. You should be able to resume most of your regular activities within 4 to 8 weeks. Before then:
- Don't lift objects heavier than your baby for the first 6 to 8 weeks.
- Don't put extra strain on your body and avoid being active to the point of exhaustion.
- Avoid heavy housework or any activity that makes you breathe heavily or strains your muscles.
- Do not drive a car for at least 2 weeks and/or if you are taking pain medication, if you feel weak or unsafe behind the wheel.

Is it possible to breastfeed after a cesarean section?

You can begin breastfeeding almost immediately after a cesarean section. To



breastfeed, use positions that will not injure the wound. If you are taking medication, consult your doctor before breastfeeding. The medication could pass to the baby through breast milk.

Social and Emotional Aspect

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can manage the emotional and physical concerns that arise during your pregnancy, please visit your primary care physician or call the following numbers:

Medical Advice Line

1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804

APS Health

787-641-9133

References

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/healthy-lifestyle/labor-and-delivery/in-depth/c-section-recovery/art-20047310>

<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000624.htm>

https://www.babycenter.com/baby/postpartum-health/c-section-recovery_221

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