



## INTRODUCTION TO C-SECTION SURGERY

A C-section, or caesarean section, is a surgical method of delivering a baby through incisions in the mother's abdomen and uterus. It's a procedure that can be either planned in advance or performed as an emergency response to safeguard the health of the mother and baby.



## UNDERSTANDING YOUR ABDOMEN (TUMMY): THE LAYERS BENEATH

During a C-section, the surgeon goes through several layers: These include; the skin, subcutaneous fat (your outer layer of fat just under the skin), fascia, separates the abdominal lining over the muscles, cuts through the peritoneum and finally the uterus and amniotic sac. This precise approach ensures safe access to deliver the baby.



## MEDICATIONS: COMFORT AND CARE DURING YOUR PROCEDURE

Pain management during a C-section typically involves regional anaesthesia. This means you may have an epidural or spinal block. This procedure involves inserting a needle into the lower part of your spine to deliver medication, which numbs around your tummy and legs. This allows you to be awake and pain-free during the birth. You may feel a pushing sensation on your tummy, as they deliver your baby. In very occasional circumstances, they may give you an anaesthetic which puts you to sleep for your c-section birth. This is only used in special circumstances and will be discussed with you before proceeding.



## PLANNING AHEAD: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PLANNED AND EMERGENCY C-SECTIONS

C-sections come in two main types: planned and emergency. Planned C-sections are scheduled due to medical reasons or personal choice. Emergency C-sections occur when unforeseen complications arise, necessitating immediate delivery for the safety of mother or baby.

# Your C-Section Journey: Understanding, Preparing, and Recovering



## CATEGORIES OF C-SECTION: WHAT THEY MEAN FOR YOU

Beyond planned and emergency, C-sections can be further categorised based on urgency and necessity, such as elective (chosen for non-medical reasons) or medically indicated (for health-related reasons). Each category helps healthcare professionals decide the best approach for the safety and health of both mother and baby.



## CLOSING THE CHAPTER: STITCHES VS. STAPLES

After delivering the baby and placenta, the surgeon closes the incisions. The uterus is usually sutured with stitches that dissolve on their own. The abdominal layers may be closed with either dissolvable stitches or a combination of stitches and staples, depending on what is considered best for your healing process.



## WHICH LAYERS DO THEY CLOSE?

The surgeon closes the uterus, muscle layers, and skin. Sometimes, the abdominal fat layer is also sutured, but this depends on the individual surgery and the surgeon's practice. The aim is to promote optimal healing and reduce the risk of complications.



## THE TEAM SUPPORTING YOU: WHO'S IN THE ROOM

Typically, the team includes the obstetrician, an anaesthetist, nurses, and often a paediatrician. Your partner or a family member is usually welcome to be by your side, offering emotional support and sharing in the first moments of your baby's life. The exact number of people can vary,

but rest assured, everyone present is there to ensure the safest and most positive birth experience. If the amount of professionals in the theatre is overwhelming, please ask if any students can leave the room. Remember: this is your C-section birth



## WHEN DO THEY USE FORCEPS?

Forceps may be used during a C-section to assist in delivering the baby, especially if the baby is not easily reachable by hand. This is more common in certain situations, such as a deep pelvic position of the baby or specific complications. The surgeon will keep you informed, as the c-section birth progresses.



## GENTLE BIRTH: MAKING YOUR EXPERIENCE AS POSITIVE AS POSSIBLE

A gentle C-section, or family-centred caesarean, aims to make the experience more personal and less clinical where possible. This can involve immediate skin-to-skin contact, a calm environment with music of your choice, and the use of a clear drape for witnessing the birth. If your birth is planned, please ask your surgeon or theatre staff if these adjustments can be made.



## IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY: THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS RECOVERY

Following the surgery, you'll spend time in a recovery area, where you and your baby can have skin-to-skin contact and begin breastfeeding if desired. Recovery involves managing discomfort with medication and gradually increasing your activity level under the guidance of your healthcare team.

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