

# Preparing for your C-section:

## What to do before, during and after

**Congratulations!** You are getting close to meeting your baby.

We are thrilled you are allowing us to celebrate this time with you and your family.

Our goal is for you to have the safest experience possible as you welcome your new baby.



### How to prepare for your C-section

You will be given a bottle of chlorhexidine (Hibiclens®) in the clinic. This is a skin cleanser to be used the night before and the morning of your C-section. This helps to reduce the bacteria on your skin and reduces the risk of infection.

Preparation <b>DO's</b>	Preparation <b>DON'Ts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Take a shower <b>the night before AND the morning of</b> your scheduled surgery, using the chlorhexidine to clean your abdomen. <b>Pay special attention to the lower abdomen where your incision will be.</b> The chlorhexidine can be used in place of soap or shower gel.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Do NOT use any lotion</b> on your abdomen after showering.</li><li>Do NOT use chlorhexidine <b>as a shampoo or on your face.</b></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Save any remaining chlorhexidine</b> and use it in the shower following your delivery, once the bandage is removed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Do NOT shave your pubic area</b> before your C-section. Nicks in the skin can increase your risk of infection.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>You may eat and drink normally <b>until midnight</b> before your C-section.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Do NOT eat after midnight.</b> If you do, we may have to move the start time of your surgery for your safety.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Drink plenty of water or clear sports drinks like Gatorade® or Powerade® <b>until 3 hours before</b> your scheduled surgery time.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Do NOT drink:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>milk</li><li>juice with pulp</li><li>protein drinks</li><li>coffee with cream, milk or sugar</li></ul></li></ul>

+ **Flip the page** to learn what to expect on the day of your C-section, and what to do afterwards.

# What to expect on the day of your C-section

On the day of your C-section, **be sure to remove any piercings other than earrings** for your safety.

**You should arrive to the Labor and Delivery Unit 2 hours before your scheduled surgery time.** You will be assisted to the recovery room, where you will begin prep for your C-section. This includes placing an IV and listening to your baby's heartbeat. Anesthesia will meet with you at this time. You will be offered regional anesthesia (a spinal or epidural) for the surgery. Regional anesthesia means that you will be awake but numb (some patients feel a slight pressure but not pain).

Once it is time for your surgery, you will be moved to the delivery room for anesthesia. **You may invite one support person into the delivery room** after we confirm that your anesthesia is satisfactory. **Phone calls, video calls, and filming are not allowed in the delivery room.** We will let you and your support person know when it is okay to take pictures.

Once your baby is born and assessed by the team, your baby will join you at the head of the bed until the surgery is over. Soon after the surgery, you will go back to the recovery room for skin-to-skin and feeding. If you are preterm or if your baby needs care by the neonatology team, we will bring your baby to you once he or she is stable. After a brief visit, your baby will go to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

## What happens after your C-section

On the day of delivery	When you're home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Two family members at a time may join you in the recovery area where you will stay about 2 hours</b>, then move to your postpartum room. While in recovery, you should begin to eat and drink as soon as you feel able.</li><li>• <b>Following a C-section, expect to stay in the hospital up to 4 days</b> depending on your condition. Many patients go home after 2 days.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Your bandage will need to stay on for 5 to 7 days after your surgery.</b> This encourages healing and prevents infection. (In some cases the dressing may be removed prior to your hospital discharge – most people remove it at home.) Once you've removed it, take a shower and allow warm, soapy water to rinse the incision site. There's no need to scrub.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You will have a catheter in your bladder during the C-section. We will remove the catheter as soon as you have feeling in your legs and can tell your bladder is full. <b>Once the catheter is removed, we encourage you to get up and move around as much as possible.</b> This helps decrease stiffness, improves blood flow, reduces the risk of developing blood clots and helps to move gas out of your system.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After each shower make sure to <b>pat the incision site dry and keep it dry.</b> If your incision seems moist, use a thin pad or panty-liner to wick away any dampness.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Once you are on the Mother-Baby unit, <b>we will give you plenty of information about how to take care of yourself and your new baby.</b> Feel free to ask questions!</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You may have tape strips (also called Steri-strips®) across your incision. <b>These should fall off on their own.</b> (If they haven't fallen off within 7 days, please take them off in the shower.)</li></ul>

## To ensure you recover from the surgery well:

- + Shower every day. Do not take a bath, soak, or swim until your doctor says you may. Use remaining chlorhexidine as soap, especially when cleaning the area around the incision.
- + Call your doctor if you notice any of the following. These could be signs of an infection:
  - Redness or swelling around the incision
  - Significant bleeding (some bleeding at the incision is normal)
  - Fever over 100.5°F
  - Pus (thick yellowish or greenish fluid) draining from the incision
  - Persistent pain not relieved by pain medication (Tylenol® or ibuprofen)



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