

may be admitted to the level 2 nursery. This means they will be admitted to the hospital as a patient in their own right, receiving specialised nursing and medical care.

Your recovery

You will be taken to the recovery room and monitored for a short period. If the baby is stable, they will usually be able to stay with you. During this time, skin-to-skin contact will be initiated.

If you wish to breastfeed, this will be encouraged as soon as possible. The midwives will assist you with all infant care and monitor you frequently during this early period.

During the first day post delivery, it is usual to have an intravenous drip and urinary catheter in place. You will be provided with pain relief which may consist of further epidural drugs, intravenous or intramuscular injections. You should discuss options with your anaesthetist.

After the first day post delivery, you will be encouraged to walk around the ward to assist in your rapid recovery. By 3 to 4 days after surgery you will experience minimal discomfort and be moving well. There may be sutures or staples to be removed from the incision site around day 5. Some vaginal bleeding from the placental site will occur and will persist for several weeks. The same bleeding occurs when you have a vaginal birth.

At home

Plan to avoid heavy lifting and vigorous exercise for 6 weeks. If possible, arrange for a few weeks of adult support after the baby is born. Avoid hectic social schedules for a few months and allow time for rest and getting to know and enjoy your new baby.

If you have any further questions or concerns at this time, please contact your health practitioner.

Booked caesarean section Information for parents



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St John of God Health Care is a leading provider of Catholic healthcare in Australia and bases its care on the Christian values of Hospitality, Compassion, Respect, Justice and Excellence.

Caesarean Section

Your doctor will have discussed the need for a booked caesarean section with you. There are many reasons why you may require a caesarean section. Whatever the reason it will be aimed at ensuring the safest birth option for you and your baby.

What is a caesarean section?

A caesarean section is a surgical operation that allows the baby to be delivered through an incision in the abdomen. This cut will usually be made approximately at the top of your pubic hair, aiming for the outcome of minimal obvious scarring.

Anaesthetic options

The most suitable anaesthetic option for you will be based on your anaesthetist's assessment.

- **General anaesthetic:** this is an anaesthetic which affects your whole body. You will be given an injection in theatre and "sleep" through the operation. To avoid the anaesthetic drugs passing across the placenta to the baby, the operation must be performed swiftly as soon as the anaesthetic is given. Support persons and partners are usually not present at the operation.
- **Epidural anaesthetic:** this is an anaesthetic technique which allows you to remain awake throughout the operation. Your anaesthetist will discuss this technique with you in more detail during your pre operative visit. Epidural anaesthetics allow you to see your baby immediately post delivery. During the operation, you will be aware of pressure sensations but experience no pain and be unable to move your lower limbs.

Partners are usually able to be present at epidural caesareans. However, they will be asked to wait outside the operating theatre until the epidural has been inserted.

Admission to hospital

Before your operation you will need to complete your booking interview with the hospital, visit your anaesthetist and have some blood taken for testing. If you live out of town, you may be admitted to hospital the night prior to your surgery. This will not only reduce travel-related stress but also allow the anaesthetist to visit and tests to be carried out. If you arrange it with your doctor, you can be admitted to hospital on the day of the operation. You are required to be admitted to the ward at least 2 hours prior to your surgery.

Preparation for surgery

You will be required to fast from food and fluids as instructed by your anaesthetist. The nurses will clip your pubic hair at the top to expose the incision site and reduce the discomfort of the bandaid being removed from the wound after surgery. After a shower you will be dressed in a theatre gown and hat. If your partner decides to go into the operating theatre with you, they will be required to wear theatre clothes and a hat.

Both ward and theatre staff will question you about the intended operation fasting times and any allergies. This is just hospital protocol and nothing to be concerned about.

Transport to and from theatre is on the ward bed. You will be placed in the operating theatre waiting area until the anaesthetist is ready, then wheeled into the operating theatre.

The caesarean operation and birth

An intravenous drip will be inserted to allow fluid replacement and drugs to be easily administered. The epidural anaesthetic or general anaesthetic will now be given. After the epidural is working effectively or you are asleep, a urinary catheter

will be inserted to allow complete emptying of the bladder during and after the surgery.

For those having an epidural anaesthetic, your partner will now be invited into the theatre and be seated at the top of the table, close to your head. There will be a material screen placed at your chest level to prevent you both from viewing the actual operation.

There may be a lot of activity, strange smells and noise in the operating room. This is normal! Usually there are at least 8 people in the room including some familiar faces such as your doctor, anaesthetist and midwife; as well as scrub nurses, an assistant doctor and a paediatrician. It is usual for a paediatrician to be present at caesarean births. A paediatrician is a specialist doctor who will care for your baby after delivery and during your stay in hospital.

The baby is usually born 10 to 15 minutes after the start of the operation, but it may take another 30 to 40 minutes before the surgery is completed and you are transferred to the recovery room. During this time the midwife and paediatrician will help the baby to adjust to the changes they must make to live outside the uterus. The baby often cries immediately after delivery, but needs to have some suction and stimulation to help them breathe properly. The baby will be brought to you for a cuddle as soon as they are dried and stabilised. Your partner may take a camera to theatre to record these first cuddles and early moments.

Nursery

As your baby is being cared for by a specialist, they

