

When to Get Medical Help

Call 9-1-1 if you have:

- Chest pain or pressure
- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- A seizure or if you collapse
- Thoughts of harming yourself, your baby, or someone else
- Heavy bleeding that soaks through 1 pad every hour for 2 hours or more, especially if you feel weak, dizzy, or faint

Go to the Emergency Department if you have:

Signs of High Blood Pressure

- Severe headache
- Changes in your vision
- Pain in the upper part of your belly
- New or increased swelling in your face, hands, or legs

Fever or Signs of Infection

- A fever higher than 38°C (100°F)
- Chills, nausea, vomiting, or feeling unwell
- Vaginal bleeding or smelly discharge
- Burning when passing urine

Heavy Bleeding

- Vaginal bleeding increases or smells bad
- Blood clots larger than a golf ball

Heart or Blood Clot Concerns

- A fast or irregular heartbeat
- One leg that is red, painful, swollen, warm, or cooler than usual

Contact your Healthcare Practitioner if you have:

Incision Concerns

- Incision starts to open
- Incision becomes red, warm, swollen, or starts to bleed or drain fluid

Other Physical Symptoms

- Pain that suddenly gets worse and is not relieved by rest or pain medicine
- Trouble passing urine
- Breast pain, redness, or swelling that does not improve after feeding or pumping

Mental Health Concerns

- Sadness, worry, anger, or panic that does not get better
- Trouble sleeping even when your baby is sleeping
- Feeling hopeless, unable to care for yourself or your baby

Important Reminders

Call 811 to speak with a nurse any time, day or night.

Call your doctor, midwife, or nurse practitioner if you have questions or concerns.

For additional resources and supports please visit the following link:
<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/health-and-wellness/pregnancy-and-childbirth>



After Your Caesarean Birth (C-Section)

A Guide for Recovery at Home



Recovery After Your Caesarean Birth

A caesarean birth is a major surgery and most people require 6 to 8 weeks to recover.

Going home is an important step in your recovery.

Before you left the hospital, your healthcare team helped you manage your pain, start moving safely, taught you how to care for your incision, how to feed and care for your baby.

This guide provides information about:

- Returning to activities
- Managing pain
- Vaginal bleeding after birth
- Driving
- Caring for your incision
- Follow-up care
- When to get medical help

Discharge to 6 Weeks

Remember to make any follow-up appointments with your **healthcare practitioner (doctor, midwife, or nurse practitioner)**.

Returning to Activities

For the first 6 weeks:

- Get up slowly to prevent dizziness
- Roll onto your side before getting out of bed
- Take short walks every day
- Move often during the day
- Increase activity slowly
- Listen to your body
- Hold a pillow against your tummy when coughing, sneezing, or laughing
- Do not lift anything heavier than your baby.

Managing Pain

Take pain medicine as directed to help you stay comfortable and move around more easily.

If you have prescription pain medicine:

- Take it exactly as directed on the prescription label

If you do not have prescription pain medicine:

- Ask your pharmacist if acetaminophen or any anti-inflammatory (ibuprofen or naproxen) medications are right for you
- Always follow the instructions on the package or from your pharmacist

To help prevent constipation:

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Eat foods high in fibre
- Ask your pharmacist or healthcare practitioner if you should use a stool softener

Vaginal Bleeding After Birth

It is normal to have vaginal bleeding after a C-section. Use sanitary pads **only**.

Your bleeding should:

- Slowly become lighter
- Change from bright red to pink, then brown or yellow-white

See the “When to Get Medical Help” section if you are worried about your bleeding.

Driving

- Ask your healthcare practitioner when it is safe for you to drive, everyone recovers at their own pace.

Taking Care of Your Incision

Your incision may have been closed with:

Staples

- Usually removed within 7-10 days

Steri-Strips

- Fall off on their own
- Can be removed after 7 to 10 days if still in place

Dissolving Stitches

- Dissolve on their own

Showering

- Shower as you normally do
- Let water run over your incision
- Do not scrub the incision
- Gently pat the area with a separate clean hand towel
- Let your incision air dry

Bathing

You may have a bath after 14 days if your incision is healing well and there is no special dressing, bleeding, drainage, or opening of the wound.

Your 6-Week Follow-Up Visit

It is important you go to this appointment.

At this visit you can discuss:

- How your incision is healing
- Returning to sexual activity
- Birth control options
- Exercise and recovery
- Physiotherapy for pelvic floor health, strength and scar healing
- Any questions or concerns