

Patient Information: Caesarean Section

The Caesarean Section rate in the hospital is 26% - which is also the national Caesarean Section rate.

Caesarean Sections may be performed before labour (e.g. for mothers who have had two or more previous Caesarean Sections, breech presentation at term in a first pregnancy or a persistently low - lying placenta). When Caesarean Sections are planned in advance and not associated with additional risk factors, mothers are admitted on the morning of surgery.

Caesarean Sections may be performed in labour. The most common indication for Caesarean Section in labour is failure to advance (i.e. failure of the cervix to dilate or of the baby's head to descend into the pelvis) and concern in relation to the baby's ability to cope with the continuation of labour.

Caesarean Sections are usually performed under epidural or spinal anaesthesia; occasionally a general anaesthetic is required; your partner will be encouraged to remain with you unless a general anaesthetic is required.

You will be given an injection of antibiotics prior to delivery in order to minimise the risk of infection after surgery.

A catheter (a soft, plastic tube) will be inserted into your bladder prior to Caesarean Section in order to keep your bladder empty; this will be removed at 12-24 hours after your operation.

You will also be given once-daily injections while in hospital of a special medication after delivery in order to minimise the risk of developing clots in your legs and lungs (a rare, but serious, complication of Caesarean Section).

After your operation, effective pain relief is provided by a comprehensive range of medications, which are usually continued for 7-10 days after discharge from hospital.

The majority of mothers who undergo Caesarean Section are discharged home within 5 days of delivery.

The majority of women who have a Caesarean Section in their first pregnancy are encouraged to consider vaginal delivery in a subsequent pregnancy. A fact sheet on Vaginal Birth after Caesarean Section is available from this section of the website.

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