

## Before a Cesarean Birth



A cesarean section may be scheduled in advance. Or it may be a decision made more quickly. In either case, the preparation is nearly the same. Your healthcare team will get you ready for surgery. If you have a partner, they can likely stay with you for most of this time.

### For a scheduled cesarean section

Before a cesarean section is scheduled, tests may be done to confirm your due date. This helps to make sure that your baby is ready to be born when the cesarean section is done. Cesarean sections are often scheduled near the 39th week of pregnancy. Your healthcare provider will tell you when to stop eating or drinking before surgery. In some cases, your provider may let you drink clear liquids up to 2 hours before surgery.

### Before your surgery

To prepare for your cesarean section:

- You'll need to sign a consent form.
- Any hair on your stomach may be removed to just below the top of your pubic bone. (Don't do this yourself at home.)
- A wash that cleans and disinfects the skin will be applied to your belly.
- An IV (intravenous) line will be put into a vein in your arm or hand. This is used to give you medicines and fluids.
- A thin tube (catheter) will be placed in your bladder. This is to drain urine.
- A fetal monitor may be used to check your baby's heart rate.
- You will be given anesthesia. This may be a spinal block, epidural block, or general anesthesia.
- You will get antibiotic medicine through the IV line.

### Notes for your partner

In most cases, you can stay with the mother while she is being prepared for surgery. She may be feeling tense. Help her relax. Your support can mean a lot. If you'll be staying with her during the cesarean section, you may be asked to wash your hands and put on special clothes.

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