

# Discharge Instructions for Cesarean Section (C-Section)



You had a cesarean section, also called a C-section. During the C-section, your baby was delivered through an incision in your stomach and uterus. Full recovery after a C-section can take time. It's important to take care of yourself — for your own sake and because your new baby needs you. Here are some guidelines to follow at home.

## Incision care

Here's how to take care of your incision:

- Shower as needed. Pat your incision dry.
- Watch your incision for signs of infection, such as more redness or drainage.
- Hold a pillow against the incision when you laugh or cough and when you get up from a lying or sitting position.
- Remember, it can take as long as 6 weeks for your incision to heal.

## Activity

Here are some suggestions:

- Don't try to take care of anyone other than your baby and yourself.
- Remember, the more active you are, the more likely you are to have an increase in your bleeding.
- Get lots of rest. Take naps in the afternoon.
- Increase your activities bit by bit.
- Plan your activities so that you don't have to go up or down stairs more than needed.
- Do postsurgical deep breathing and coughing exercises. Ask your healthcare provider for instructions.
- Don't lift anything heavier than your baby until your healthcare provider tells you it's OK.
- Don't drive until your healthcare provider says it's OK.
- Don't have sex until after you've had a checkup with your healthcare provider and you have decided on a birth control method.
- Let others do things for you. Don't hesitate to ask for help.

## Follow-up

Make a follow-up appointment as directed by our staff.

## When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these:

- Fever of 100.4° F ( 38°C) or higher

- Redness, pain, or drainage at your incision site
- Bleeding that needs a new sanitary pad every hour. Heavy vaginal bleeding may be a sign of postpartum hemorrhage. It needs medical care right away.
- Severe belly pain
- Pain or urgency with urination
- Foul odor from vaginal discharge
- Trouble urinating or emptying your bladder
- No bowel movement within 1 week after the birth of your baby
- Swollen, red, painful area in the leg
- Appearance of rash or hives
- Sore, red, painful area on the breasts that may come with flu-like symptoms
- Feelings of anxiety, panic, or depression

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