



## Your caesarean date

Your caesarean is currently scheduled for: ..... **date**

You need to come to the hospital at: ..... **time**

*This date is not guaranteed and we may need to postpone if there is a baby who needs to be born more urgently. If you start to get contractions or other symptoms of labour before your booked date, please contact your lead maternity carer (LMC).*

# Preparing for your caesarean

## Talk to an anaesthetist

You may need an appointment with an anaesthetist before your caesarean. This may be by phone or in person. They will talk to you about your general health, your anaesthetic and answer any questions.



## Get blood tests

It is important to have blood prepared for you – just in case you are one of the few people who require a blood transfusion.

Please make sure you have your blood group checked before your operation. This must be done the day before, or on a Saturday if your surgery is on a Monday.

Call Labtests to find your local centre and check the opening hours on 09 574 7399 or go to [www.labtests.co.nz](http://www.labtests.co.nz) for information.

## Don't eat for six hours before the operation

You need to have an empty stomach on the day of the operation. If your caesarean is in the morning, do not eat anything after midnight. You can drink clear fluids (water, black coffee, herbal tea, juice) until you arrive at the hospital.

## Have a shower before you leave home

You do not need to shave your pubic hair; the staff will clip this if needed when they help you get ready for your operation.

## Arrive on time

It is important you arrive on time. If you have any problems with transport, let us know as soon as possible.



## Ensure you understand what is happening

If you need help understanding English, please let us know beforehand and we can arrange an interpreter. This should not be a family member, midwife or doctor.

## Bring a support person and your hospital bags

You can have one support person in the operating theatre with you if you are awake for your operation.

Bring your bags packed with the things you and your baby will need for your hospital stay and your maternity records, if you have them.

## The day of your caesarean

When you arrive, you will be shown to a room where you will get ready for your caesarean.

You will put on a theatre gown and a midwife will trim the top portion of your pubic hair with clippers (if needed).

You will have an IV line placed in your arm.

You will meet with the obstetric and anaesthetic doctors who will explain the possible risks of the caesarean and anaesthetic and ask you to sign a consent form.

Your support person can go with you into theatre; they will be given special theatre clothes (scrubs) to wear.

Your support person can take photos of you and your baby once they are born. Please do not film or photograph staff without their permission.

## The staff

You will be looked after by qualified doctors who are training to be specialists, or by a specialist who is on duty (unless you have a private obstetrician).

There are lots of people in theatre; all these staff play a role in taking care of you and your baby.



## Making sure you are pain free

The anaesthetist will place the anaesthetic into your back using a small needle.

The anaesthetic blocks the sensation of pain however you will feel pressure and some pulling and pushing. Your legs will feel too heavy to move. Any feeling will be tested before the surgery starts to make sure you are numb.

The anaesthetist will remain next to you throughout the surgery.

Some people may require a general anaesthetic that puts them to sleep. It is theatre policy not to have support people in theatre when there is a general anaesthetic.

## Your operation

Your support person will sit near you at the top of the bed and will not be able to see the surgery which takes place behind a screen.

You will have a urinary catheter placed in your bladder and you will be connected to equipment to monitor your pulse, blood pressure and oxygen levels.

It usually takes about 15 minutes for your baby to be born and about 60 minutes for the caesarean to be finished. It is OK to ask for special music to be played, or for prayers or karakia to be said in the theatre.

The doctor usually waits a minute before cutting the cord to allow extra blood and oxygen to go to your baby after birth.



Your baby will then be dried quickly and brought to you for a skin-to-skin cuddle. Skin-to-skin care helps settle babies breathing, heart rates and temperatures – preparing them for their first breastfeed.

## After your baby is born

You, your baby and your support person will be moved to the recovery area after your surgery. You will be closely observed for about an hour before being moved to a room in the maternity ward.

Usually, your baby will be ready to feed within the first hour after birth; a midwife will be there to help you.

Other family members can meet your new baby once you are back on the maternity ward.

## Placenta/ whenua

You will be asked if you would like to keep your placenta. Please ask a friend or family member to take it home for you on the day of the birth.

## Your recovery

Follow these simple steps to speed your recovery and help you get home quickly.

1. Eat and drink as soon as you feel able
2. We will help you get out of bed about six hours after your surgery.
3. Take pain relief regularly. Don't wait for the pain medication to wear off before you take your next dose.

We will check on you regularly after the surgery to make sure that you are recovering normally.



## Visiting in maternity

Usually, you can have your partner or key support person stay with you throughout your time in hospital.

Hospital visiting times for all other people are between 2pm and 8pm daily. Please let your friends and whānau know the best times to visit.

## Going home

After a planned caesarean, you will usually be ready to go home after 48 hours. You will be given a prescription for pain relief to take when you get home. These tablets are safe to take when breastfeeding.

Your dressing will be checked by the midwife visiting you at home. There is a daily zoom breastfeeding group you can join if you need support with breastfeeding.

## Further information

If you have any questions about why you are being advised to have a caesarean birth or about any aspect of the surgery, please discuss this with your lead maternity carer.

# Notes

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