



Waitemata
District Health Board

Best Care for Everyone



Your planned caesarean section

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*Information on how to prepare for the birth of your baby
by planned caesarean.*
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Caesarean date

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

You will need to come to:..... at:.....

This date is not guaranteed, as occasionally we need to postpone if there is a baby who needs to be born more urgently. The operation usually occurs 2 – 4 hours after your admission time. If you start to get contractions or other symptoms of labour before your booked date, please contact your Lead Maternity Carer (LMC) for advice.

Preparing for your caesarean

Anaesthetic review

You will need to complete an anaesthetic self assessment form, and you may need to have an appointment with an anaesthetist to assess you for particular anaesthetic risks and discuss the kind of anaesthetic you will have. It is important you tell the anaesthetist, if for religious or other reasons, you would not agree to a blood transfusion if you need one.

Blood tests

A blood transfusion is rarely required for your caesarean, however we always make sure we have blood prepared for you. To do this, we need a recent blood sample. It is essential that you follow the advice below:

| If your caesarean is: | Get your blood tests taken |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Monday | Saturday morning at LABTESTS |
| Tuesday – Friday | The day before your caesarean at LABTESTS |
| The day after a public holiday | On / / at LABTESTS |

You may need to check which collection centres are open via www.labtests.co.nz or phone: (09) 574 7399).

Shaving or waxing

If you usually shave or wax your pubic hair, this can increase the chance of a wound infection after your caesarean. We recommend that you do not shave or wax prior to your caesarean. If required the health team will trim a small area with clippers on the day of surgery in hospital.

✓ Fasting

You need to have an empty stomach on the day of the operation.

- For morning operations: DO NOT EAT OR DRINK anything after midnight.
- For afternoon operations: DO NOT EAT OR DRINK anything after 7.00am.

✓ Showering and preparing

On the morning of your operation have a shower, wash your hair. Do not shave, wear make-up, nail polish or jewellery (with the exception of a wedding ring).

✓ What to bring

Bring your bags packed with the things you will need for your hospital stay and your maternity records if you have them. You must arrive on time so if you have any problems with transport let us know as soon as possible.

Your caesarean

A midwife will meet you at the Maternity Ward when you arrive and show you to a room. You will put on a theatre gown and a midwife will trim the top portion of your pubic hair with clippers (if needed).

To ensure your stomach remains acid free during the operation, you will be given an antacid tablet.

You will meet with the doctor who will explain the risks and benefits of the operation and ask you to sign a consent form. Unless you have arranged for a private obstetrician, your operation will be performed by the doctor on duty that day.

Theatres are busy places and there will be many staff working together to keep you and your baby safe.

Once in theatre the anaesthetist will put either a spinal or a spinal and epidural catheter (tube) into your back for your anaesthetic. This will numb you from the chest down so you will feel only pressure and some pulling and pushing. Your legs will become floppy or feel heavy so you cannot move them. The feeling will be tested before surgery starts to make sure you are numb. The anaesthetist will remain next to you throughout

the surgery and will give you more pain relief if you need it. Rarely a general anaesthetic may be needed if your pain cannot be relieved.

During the operation you will have a drip in your arm and equipment to monitor your pulse and blood pressure. A catheter (tube) will be placed in your bladder

to keep it empty for the operation. From the start of the operation, it takes about 10-15 minutes for your baby to be born. Most women feel well and you should be able to hold your baby skin-to-skin straight away.

The birth of your baby is a special event in your life.

Your baby may need to be checked over by a midwife or doctor and this can happen in the theatre while the operation is in progress. After your baby is born the placenta is delivered, and the wound repaired. The whole operation takes about 45 minutes.

It is OK to ask for special music to be played, or prayers or karakia to be said in the theatre.

Friends and family

You can select **one** support person (partner, family or friend) to be with you in the operating theatre and the recovery area. Your support person will be asked to sit at the head of the bed next to you so that they can support you while your baby is being born. Unfortunately if a general anaesthetic is needed, your support person will be asked to leave the theatre. Photographs may be taken of the birth, and staff (with their consent). Videos/movies are not permitted. The rest of your family/whanau can wait in the maternity room (or lounge) until you are back in the maternity unit. You will all be re-united as soon as it is safe to do so, but allow at least 2 hours.

Please advise your family/whanau of the visiting times:

- 7am – 9pm: Partner or key support person **ONLY**
- 2pm – 4pm and 6pm – 8pm: Grandparents, friends and family.

After your baby is born

If your baby and you are well, we will recommend that, as soon as possible after birth, your baby is placed skin-to-skin with you. Your support person and midwife will assist you to hold your baby. After the operation you will be moved to the recovery area and breastfeeding can be started as soon as your baby is interested. You normally stay in the recovery area for about an hour. When you are well enough, you will be transferred to a room on the maternity ward.

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.