



What to Expect Before, During and After Your C-Section

THE
University of Vermont
HEALTH NETWORK

Porter Medical Center

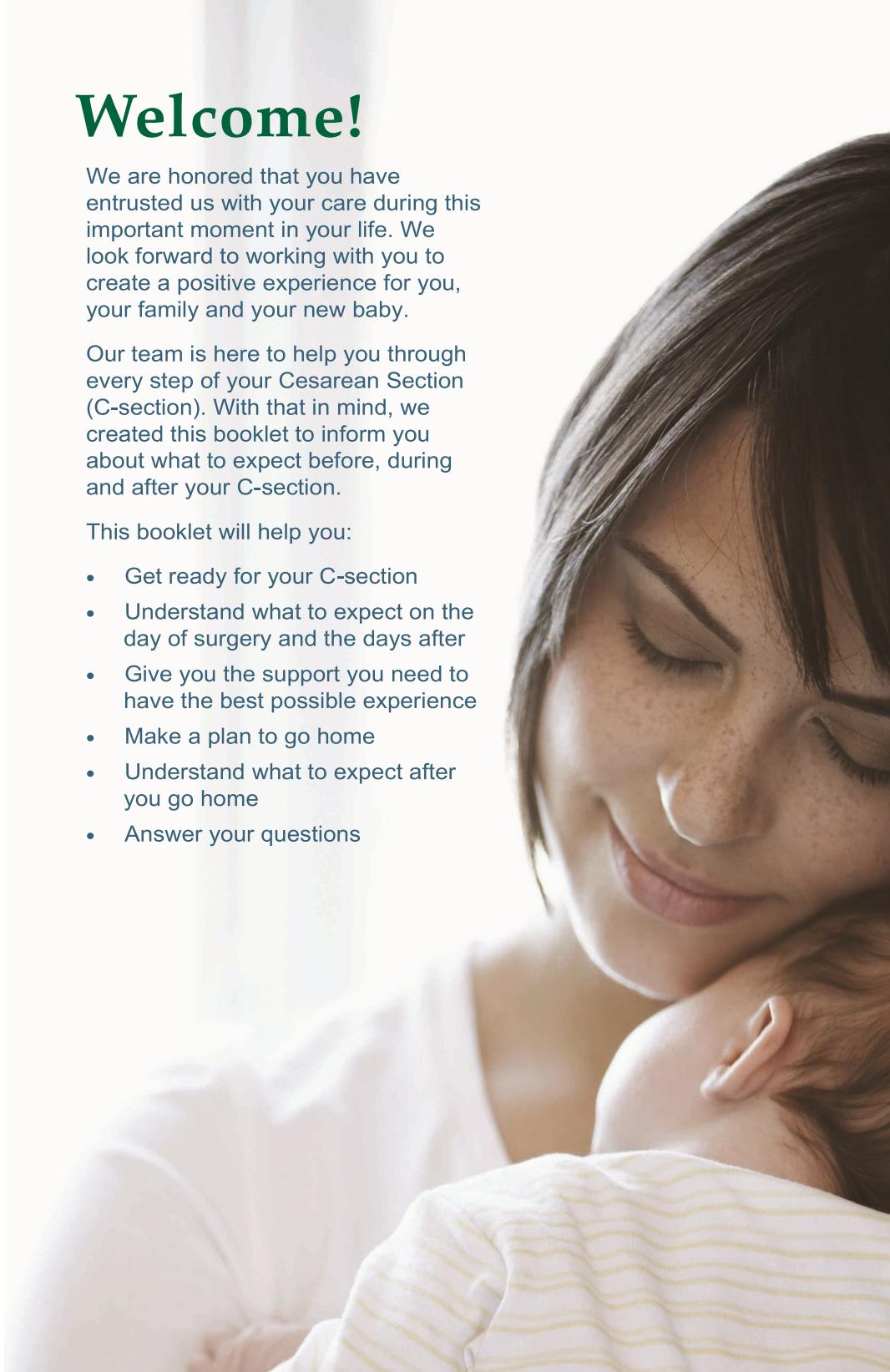
Welcome!

We are honored that you have entrusted us with your care during this important moment in your life. We look forward to working with you to create a positive experience for you, your family and your new baby.

Our team is here to help you through every step of your Cesarean Section (C-section). With that in mind, we created this booklet to inform you about what to expect before, during and after your C-section.

This booklet will help you:

- Get ready for your C-section
- Understand what to expect on the day of surgery and the days after
- Give you the support you need to have the best possible experience
- Make a plan to go home
- Understand what to expect after you go home
- Answer your questions



ENHANCED RECOVERY AFTER CESAREAN

At The University of Vermont Health Network-Porter Medical Center, we use the most up-to-date model of perioperative care to ensure better outcomes for patients having C-sections. This is called **Enhanced Recovery After Cesarean**, or **ERAC** for short.

ERAC has been shown to help patients:

- Heal and recover faster
- Need less opioid pain medication after surgery
- Have more success with breastfeeding
- Transition to home life more smoothly

We understand that every patient is different. We want to work with you to create an Enhanced Recovery plan based on your individual needs.

Please read this booklet and bring it with you to the hospital. Write down your questions and ask your doctors when you see them, or call your doctor's office. It is important for you and your loved ones to understand what to expect so those close to you can help you during your recovery in the hospital and at home.

At the end of this booklet is a space for you to write down what is important to you during this experience. Please share this information with us when you arrive so that we can answer your questions and support your goals.

We look forward to working with you to ensure you have a quick recovery, a positive bonding experience with your new baby, and are feeling prepared for next steps at home!



How to Prepare for Your C-Section

The day before your C-section a Birthing Center nurse will call to review the plan for that night and the morning of your surgery.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO IN THE 24 HOURS BEFORE MY C-SECTION?

- Take medication as instructed
- Please ask about any medications that you are unsure of
- Shower with the antibacterial soap sponge or wipes that we have provided (see Page 14 for details)
- Stay hydrated. Drink clear liquids up until two hours before your scheduled surgery time.

Clear liquids include:

- Water
- Gatorade
- Regular apple juice (no pulp)

- Drink a clear carbohydrate beverage 2.5 hours before your scheduled surgery if you are not on medication for diabetes. This will help lower your surgical stress response and help with wound healing and recovery. Options include:
 - 26oz regular Gatorade (not red)
 - 16oz regular apple juice (no pulp)

WHAT TO BRING

We recommend that you bring these items with you on the day of your C-section:

- Your packed bag
- This booklet
- Infant car seat can remain in the car. Your support person can bring it in when you are close to discharge.
- It is safest to leave non-essential jewelry at home and remove all jewelry prior to surgery.

The 24 Hours Before Your C-Section



THE DAY BEFORE

You and an OB nurse will review the plans for your C-Section



Drink only clear liquids →

8 HOURS BEFORE C-SECTION

Nothing to eat from this point forward and drink only clear liquids



WHAT TO WEAR TO THE HOSPITAL

- Loose, comfortable clothing

ARRIVAL AND PREPARATIONS AT THE BIRTHING CENTER

- Please arrive two hours before your scheduled surgery. Park in the parking lot near the Emergency Department. The main entrance does not open until 6am. Follow the signs to the Birthing Center. Press the assist button outside the doors and we will let you in!

PRE-OP

- Your registration will happen upon your arrival at the Birthing Center; you do not need to stop at the main registration office.

Once you arrive to the Birthing Center you will be directed to your room. In most instances this will remain your room throughout your entire stay. A Birthing Center nurse will begin preparing you for your C-section:

- Assess your vital signs
- Place an IV
- A Lab technician will draw additional labs if needed
- Monitor your baby's heart beat
- Administer pre-op medications
- Check your blood sugar if needed
- Review your plan of care and answer any of your questions
- Members of your OB and anesthesia team will meet with you, discuss pain management strategy, answer any last minute questions and obtain consents. They will also perform a final ultrasound, if needed.



What to Expect in the Operating Room

YOUR ANESTHESIA TEAM WILL:

- Apply monitors
- Administer antibiotics to help prevent an infection
- Administer anesthesia medications as discussed preoperatively to keep you comfortable during surgery and to help with pain management after surgery. Usually, this includes administration of both short- and long-acting pain medications with spinal, epidural or combined spinal-epidural anesthesia
- Under specific circumstances, additional pain management strategies may be recommended during or after surgery
- In most instances, you will be awake for the birth of your baby

AFTER YOUR ANESTHETIC IS ADMINISTERED, YOUR TEAM WILL:

- Listen to the baby's heart rate
- If not already done, will insert a small tube (catheter) into your bladder. This will remain for 6-12 hours, depending on your ability to walk and get to the bathroom.
- Administer a vaginal wash (at the discretion of your obstetric provider)
- Wash your belly
- Put blue drapes on your belly and test the effectiveness of your anesthesia one more time. At this point, the surgeon will be ready to start your C-section
- Your support person will come into the operating room when we are ready to start your C-section



- If you get medication to go to sleep (general anesthesia) your support person will not be able to come into the operating room. You will see them in the recovery room right after surgery
- In some situations the order of these steps may change

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOUR BABY IS BORN

- There will be a nurse caring for your baby in the operating room
- In many circumstances, a pediatrician will attend your delivery as well
- Your baby will stay with you in the operating room unless they need increased care
- When circumstances permit, a nurse will help you spend time skin-to-skin together
- From the operating room you will return to the Birthing Center to recover with a post anesthesia care nurse
- This room will most likely remain your room until you and your baby are discharged
- Your baby will continue to be cared for by the Birthing Center RN in the same room you are recovering in

- This is a good time to spend time skin to skin with your baby

The Birthing Center nurse will:

- provide feeding/breastfeeding support
- measure your baby's weight, height and head circumference
- Apply ID bands
- Perform a physical assessment
- Obtain footprints
- Administer Vitamin K, Erythromycin ointment, Hepatitis B vaccine (with parental consent)



SKIN-TO-SKIN HAS MANY BENEFITS

- Increases breastfeeding success
- Promotes parent and baby bonding
- Lowers pain and stress for mom and baby
- Helps keep baby's blood sugar normal
- Helps baby feel secure and content
- Helps keep both mom and baby's temperature, heart rate, and breathing normal

FEEDING

- We encourage infant feeding within 1-2 hours after delivery.
- When possible, we encourage breastfeeding. This can begin right away in the operating room or once your return to your Birthing Center room
- If you choose to formula feed, formula is available
- For more information and resources on breastfeeding, see "Resources" on pg. 13.



To promote the best recovery, we encourage an early return to mobility and walking. This begins in recovery with raising the back of the bed to a near-sitting position within the first hour, or as soon as you feel up to it. In addition, after your C-section you will receive:

- Ice chips or clear liquids. We encourage you to begin a regular diet as soon as you are ready (ideally within 2-4 hours).
- Two packs of sugarless gum, unless you brought your favorite flavor from home. We encourage you to chew one piece of gum for at least five minutes, three times per day until you are eating a regular diet. This will help your digestion return to normal.

- A binder around your belly to support your stitches so that you can sit up and move around more comfortably (at the discretion of your obstetric provider).
- The Enhanced Goals and Actions Checklist, which is also available on Pg. 15. Your nurse will review this with you and discuss how to use it.
- A device (incentive spirometer) to practice taking deep breaths 10 times per hour if you had general anesthesia. Your nurse will help you use this to encourage your lungs to function normally again.





In the Birthing Center

Most patients stay in the hospital for about three days. During this time, we set the following goals for your recovery:

- Be out of bed and walking within 6–8 hours after surgery
- Wear compression sleeves on your lower legs when in bed to prevent blood clots until you are up to the bathroom and walking frequently
- Eat and drink normally within 2–4 hours post-surgery
- Have your pain actively managed and tailored to your needs
- Remove urinary catheter 6–12 hours after surgery. The goal is to pass urine every 2–3 hours even though you may not feel the urge to go
- Chew gum for at least five minutes, three times per day until you are eating normally. This helps your digestion return to normal
- Walk in the halls at least three times per day



CALL, DON'T FALL

You are at increased risk for falling after you have had surgery. Please do not get out of bed by yourself until you and your nurse feel you are ready.

ROOMING IN

We encourage you to have your baby stay with you in the room. This gives you precious time to get to know your baby, learn feeding cues, and spend time skin-to-skin. When your baby goes to the Newborn Nursery for routine testing you're welcome to join.

VISITORS

Porter Birthing Center welcomes your visitors over the age of 12. (Siblings of the baby may visit at any age).

Please visit <https://www.portermedical.org/patients-visitors/> for our current practices.

Your Enhanced Recovery Plan for the Next Few Days

WHO WILL TAKE CARE OF ME AFTER SURGERY?

Birthing Center nursing staff will care for you and your baby. The OB team, anesthesia providers, and pediatricians will visit daily, or more frequently if needed.

PAIN RELIEF AFTER SURGERY

- You are the primary director of your pain management
- We will ask you to rate your pain regularly
- We will adjust your pain management plan based on how you rate your pain
- Our goal is to provide excellent pain management while limiting opioids
- The addition of a long-acting pain medication to your spinal or epidural minimizes your need for opioid pain medication.
- Most patients will receive other types of pain medications on a regular schedule (acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen)

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE YOUR RECOVERY: DAY OF DELIVERY

- Taking deep breaths
- Coughing
- Moving as much as possible
- Starting a regular diet within 2-4 hours

- Drinking fluids
- Chewing gum to help your digestion return to normal
- Getting out of bed and walking within 6-8 hours after surgery
- Having your urinary catheter removed 6-8 hours after surgery

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE YOUR RECOVERY: DAYS 1-3

- Getting your bandage removed and taking a shower
- Staying out of bed for most of the day and balancing activity with rest
- Walking in the hallway at least three times each day
- Eating a healthy diet
- Taking a stool softener and passing gas as needed to have a normal bowel movement

FAMILY AND NEWBORN BONDING AND CARE

- Continue to spend time skin-to-skin
- Learn your newborn's way of communicating their needs (cues)
- Develop confidence with comforting, caring for, and feeding your baby

Communication with Your Health Care Team

TO HELP YOU RECOVER, LET US KNOW IF YOU:

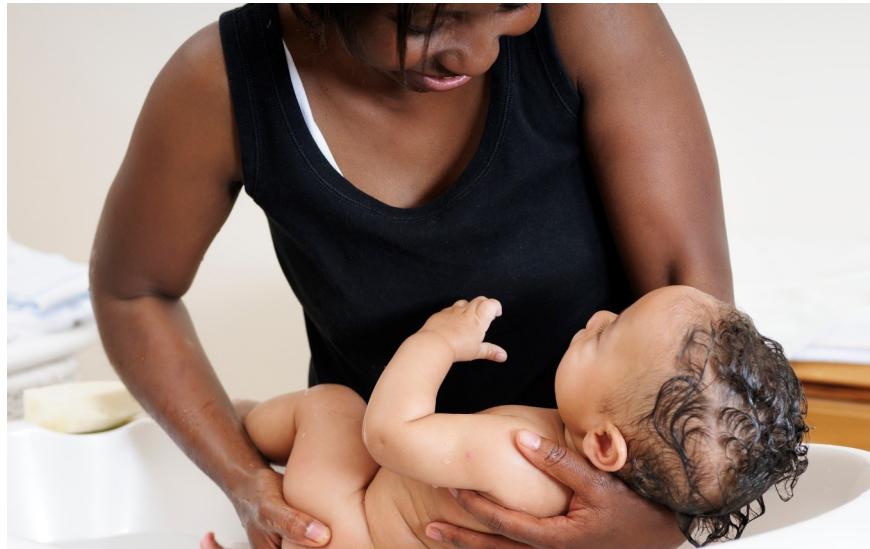
- Have inadequate pain control
- Have a headache or neck pain
- Feel nauseous or vomit
- Feel dizzy or light headed
- Have uncomfortable itching
- Feel bloated or hardness in your abdomen
- Are unable to pass gas
- Can't pass urine or fully empty your bladder
- Are having heavy vaginal bleeding (soaking through a pad an hour)
- Are passing clots



- Have heavy bleeding that returns after initially subsiding
- Feel warmth or itchiness in your incision or notice fluid leaking from the incision
- Are having difficulty feeding your baby

Some of these are common side effects while others are less common. Your nurse has tools to help you with these symptoms.





Going Home

Most patients will go home on Day 3 after surgery. You will need to have someone take you and your baby home.

Discharge is planned for mid-day though this time may change if you or your baby need more medical care.

SIGNS YOU ARE READY TO GO HOME:

- You are able to eat and drink normally
- Your pain is manageable even with activity
- Your activity level is similar to what you anticipate doing at home
- You are comfortable taking care of yourself and your baby
- You have made a plan for birth control with your OB provider
- You are comfortable with your pain management plan for home

BEFORE YOU GO HOME:

- You'll receive a booklet and mobile app "Understanding Postpartum Health and Baby Care". This has information on how to take care of yourself after surgery. This also has information on how to care for your baby.
- You'll have a discussion with your provider to plan your pain management options at home
 - If you receive a prescription, it can be filled at any pharmacy
- Your provider will make a plan for follow-up appointments at the office
 - Please reach out to your provider if you have any questions before your follow-up appointment
- Your nurse will schedule you and your baby to return to the Birthing Center 24-48 after you are discharged for a Porter Care Connection Visit
- You will schedule an appointment with your chosen pediatrician

Resources

Please call your obstetric provider with any questions about your pregnancy, delivery or postpartum course. Please make sure to have their number programmed into your phone and easily accessible.

Porter Obstetrics, Midwifery & Gynecology

802-388-6326 Or 802-388-6347

Porter Birthing Center

802-388-4720

Porter Pediatric Primary Care

802-388-7959

Expectant Parent Classes

WIC:

[VT 1-800-464-4343](#)

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:

Call or text 988

VT Department of Health:

[www.healthvermont.gov/family](#)

211 for resources and info

24/7 Parent Stress Line:

1-800-632-8188

[www.parentshelpingparents.org/stressline](#)

Lactation websites:

Global Health Media Project

Breastfeeding Videos:

[www.globalhealthmedia.org/topic/breastfeeding/](#)

Stanford Hospital Newborn Nursery:

[www.med.stanford.edu/newborns](#)

Tom Hale Infant Risk Center:

[www.infantrisk.com](#)

INFORMATION

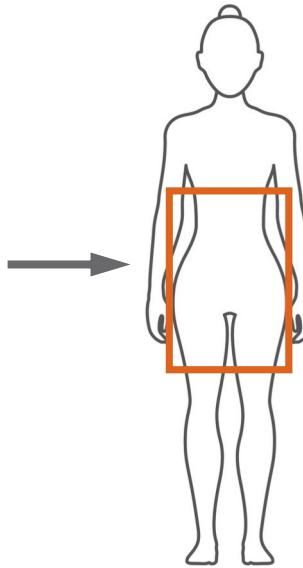
Preoperative Showering Instructions

You play an important role in the prevention of a surgical site infection by preparing your skin to be as germ free as possible. Your surgeon has asked that you shower with the antibacterial soap sponge or wipes that we have provided to you.

It contains chlorohexidine gluconate (CHG). If you have a known allergy to CHG, you should not use this soap and inform your surgeon or nurse. In this instance you should use Dial™ or Safeguard™ soap.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

- Shower the night before and the morning of your surgery
- Do not shave the surgical area
- At the end of the shower, use the **sponge** side of the provided soap applicator to wash the indicated area noted in the box for a full two minutes while facing away from the water
- Let it soak for an additional one minute
- Rinse your entire body
- Gently dry yourself with a clean towel
- Do not use powder, cream or lotion after your showers
- Change to recently laundered and dried bed linen and clothing (e.g. pajamas) after your evening shower



The Enhanced Recovery after Cesarean Delivery Checklist

Our goal is to improve outcomes for birthing person, baby, and family unit. The steps listed here promote recovery, health, and facilitate bonding. They may also lead to earlier discharge from the hospital.

Please use this checklist to help track your progress and identify areas of improvement prior to your discharge.

FIRST 24 HOURS AFTER DELIVERY:

- Begin skin-to-skin and attempt infant feeding 1-2 hours after delivery
- Eat and drink normally 2-4 hours after delivery
- Sit up, at least 45 degrees, 1-2 hours after delivery
- Sit at the edge of the bed and walk within 6-8 hours after delivery
- Remove urinary catheter 6-12 hours after delivery and attempt to pass urine every 2-3 hours

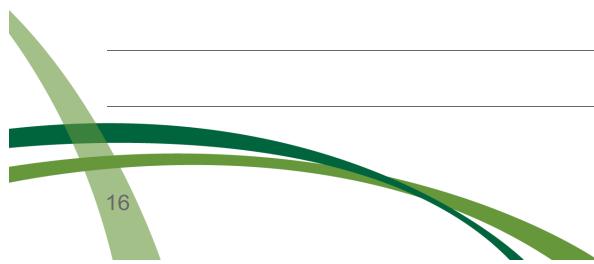
THE DAYS FOLLOWING DELIVERY:

<input type="checkbox"/> Alert a registered nurse if you have nausea or vomiting, significant itching, inadequate pain control, headache, neck pain, constipation, or difficulty urinating	<input type="checkbox"/> Wear compression sleeves on your lower legs when in bed to prevent blood clots until you are using the bathroom and walking frequently	<input type="checkbox"/> Make a plan for birth control with your OB provider
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to take scheduled non-opioid pain medications with additional pain medications as needed	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk in the halls at least 3 times per day	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss with your OB provider a plan to manage your pain at home, any prescriptions you may need, and the follow-up plan
<input type="checkbox"/> Chew gum for at least 5 minutes three times per day until you are able to tolerate food normally	<input type="checkbox"/> Balance staying out of bed for most of the day and taking time to rest	<input type="checkbox"/> Review home care instructions with your nurse
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask your nurse questions related to infant feeding	

NEWBORN SPECIFIC GOALS:

<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm the provider you've selected for your newborn	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan for circumcision, if desired	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete birth certificate
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete routine newborn care: medications and vaccines, hearing screen, and newborn testing	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish plan for follow-up with your newborn's provider after you go home	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring infant car seat to the Birthing Center before your day of discharge

Notes







Porter Medical Center

115 Porter Drive, Middlebury, VT 05753