

Post Op Instructions for Cesarean Section (C-Section)

You had a cesarean section, or C-section. During the C-section, your baby was delivered through an incision on your belly 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, like 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.

Do postsurgical deep breathing exercises.

Do increase your everyday activities day by day.

Do plan your activities so that you don't have to go up or down stairs more than needed.

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 sexual intercourse until after you've had a checkup with your healthcare provider and you have decided on a birth control method.

Allow others to 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 requires a new sanitary pad every hour

Severe pain in the abdomen

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, and/or depression