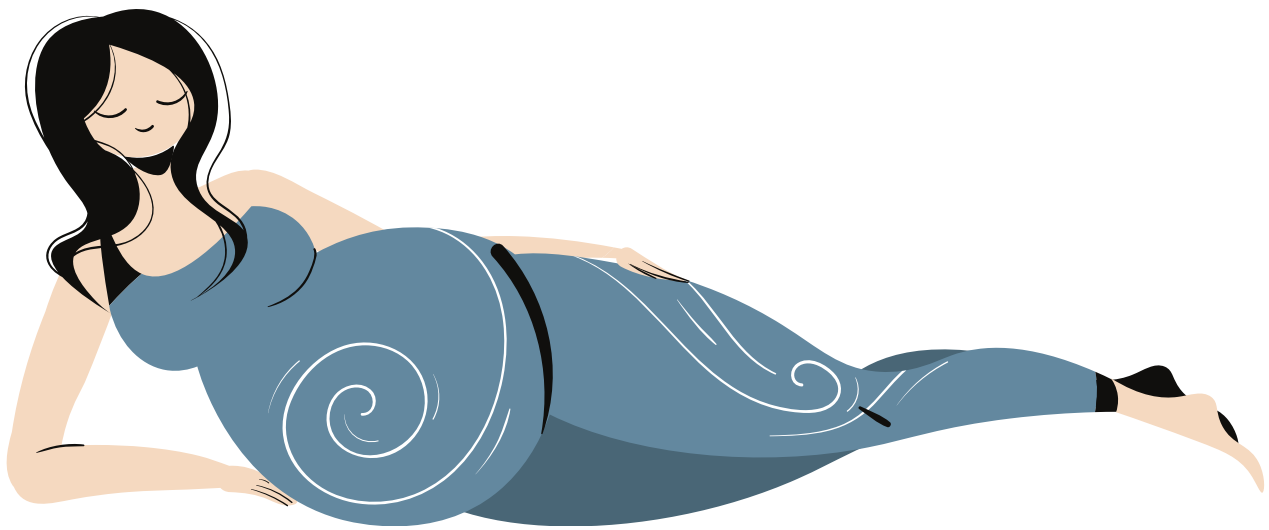


Royal-Jubilee Maternity Service Belfast

# Preventing infection

following caesarean birth





## **Before your baby's birth**

### **Your history**

Let your midwife or obstetrician (hospital doctor) know if you have previously had an infection such as MRSA, a previous caesarean section wound infection, or a previous stay in an Intensive Care Unit. This is to ensure that you are offered any necessary treatment before you are admitted to hospital.

### **Skin Preparation**

Please do not remove hair from your bikini line using a razor, cream or waxing for at least one week (7 days) before your caesarean section. This will help you avoid developing an infection.

On the morning of your caesarean section, your pubic hair will be shaved to just below the bikini line by the maternity staff.

### **Bathing**

On the morning of your surgery, before coming into hospital, have a bath or shower. Use a body wash or soap and pay particular attention to your groin and belly button during washing.

Please do not use creams, talc, or lotions on your abdomen after your shower.

### **Staying warm**

On the day of your Caesarean Section it is important that you stay warm. Please bring a warm dressing gown and slippers to wear while you wait to go to theatre.

## Looking after your wound at home

Have a daily bath or shower in a clean bathtub/shower.

Avoid perfumed body washes/soap

Dry the wound well with a newly laundered, dry towel.

Eat a well balanced diet daily with fruit and vegetables as this helps with healing.

Take iron tablets if you have been prescribed them.

Use painkillers if needed (as prescribed).

Wear loose clothes.

## Removal of the dressing

### Standard dressing

Your midwife will remove your dressing on Day 1.

If you have clips to the skin they will be removed on Day 5.

You may wish to take your prescribed painkillers prior to the removal of the clips.

### PICO dressing

If you have a PICO dressing, this will be checked by the community midwife during her visits and removed on Day 7. The clips to your skin will also be removed on this day.



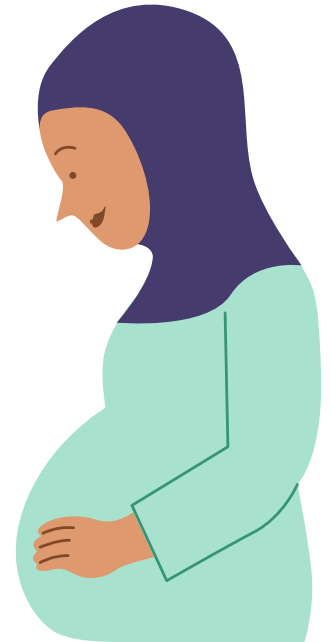
If you have any concerns about the healing of your wound, do not hesitate to contact your community midwife or GP.

As you approach late pregnancy, it is important to be aware of a range of possibilities about your birth.

You may be advised to give birth via caesarean - perhaps because of reasons to do with your health, or your baby's health. Your obstetrician can provide information about the pros and cons in order to help you make an informed decision.

The decision can be made during pregnancy (planned caesarean) or during labour (unplanned caesarean).

In the Belfast Trust, around 3 in 10 births happen via caesarean, with around half of these being planned in advance.



### **Infection following caesarean**

Of the women who give birth via caesarean, around 1 in 10 go on to develop an infection in their wound in the early days following the birth. Most of these infections are mild and can be treated at home with oral antibiotics.

Occasionally a woman will develop a more severe infection that will require admission to hospital.

This leaflet provides some hints and tips that can help you reduce your chances of developing a wound infection following caesarean, as well as comfort measures recommended by other women.



## **Tips from women who have had a caesarean birth:**

- 1 Wear large, loose underwear and clothing that goes up to your belly button
- 2 Get plenty of help at home
- 3 Use slip on footwear because bending over will be hard for a while
- 4 Rest, rest and more rest - but move little and often. The longer you sit, the harder it is.
- 5 Stand as straight as you can when moving and walking





We hope this information is useful to you.

Please keep this leaflet safe so you can refer to it if needed after the birth.

If you are concerned at any time, or have any questions, please speak to your midwife or obstetrician.



## Contact Us

RJMS  
Royal -Jubilee Maternity Hospital  
Royal Group of Hospitals  
Grosvenor Road, Belfast BT12 6BA  
Tel: RJMS Enquiries/Reception  
028 9615 1037  
Maternity Assessment Unit  
028 9615 0596

Review date August 2023

