

Birthing partner information

Caesarean Section

The aim of this leaflet is to let you know what to expect if your partner has a caesarean birth. If you would prefer not to go into theatre, your midwife will be happy to support your partner instead.

1 My partner has gone to theatre, what happens now?

We'll give you theatre clothes to wear. You can bring your camera (or phone) with you. There will be some routine safety checks with the whole team. You or your midwife will support your partner whilst she has the spinal injection or is given more anaesthetic into her epidural. Her anaesthetist will check this is working well before anything more is done.

2 What should I expect to happen in theatre?

You can sit next to your partner so that you can give her your support. You will be able to hold her hand and talk with her to reassure her. It is a very emotional time for you both, if you feel light-headed or unwell, please tell us so we can take you out for some fresh air. Your partner will lie on the operating table which will usually be tilted slightly. She will have a drip running and some routine monitors on. Your surgeon will use a sterile sheet as a screen during the operation. However you may see small reflections in lights or windows so avoid this if you need to. It usually takes 10 minutes from the start of surgery until your baby is born then another 45 minutes until the end, but can sometimes be longer.



3 What will my partner feel?

Your partner should not feel pain, but will feel pulling and tugging. Your anaesthetist will give some more pain relief if required. If she feels sick, don't worry. This can happen after routine drugs given during the operation. Your anaesthetist will help by giving drugs and more fluid into her drip. If your partner needs to have a general anaesthetic you will be asked to leave theatre. We will show you where to wait and someone will explain more as soon as they can.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask a member of staff.

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4 What happens to your baby after birth?

During an elective (planned) caesarean birth, there is usually no rush when your baby is born. If agreed beforehand the obstetrician can lie your baby down before cutting the cord to help give the baby extra blood cells from the placenta (delayed cord clamping). If you wish they might hold your baby up above the screen for you to see. He or she may not cry immediately after they are born. Don't worry. The paediatrician (baby doctor) or your midwife will give them any care they need. Once baby is breathing well and looks well, they will bring baby to you. If they have concerns, they may take your baby to the Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU). As soon as they can they will tell you how your baby is and explain what they are doing



If all is well your midwife may ask your partner if she would like 'skin to skin' with your baby lying directly on her chest. This can help keep your baby warm and give an early time for bonding. If she does, your midwife will help get a comfortable and safe position. Otherwise your midwife can wrap your baby in a towel for you or your partner to cuddle. As the operation finishes, a member of the team will show where you can change back into your own clothes while you wait for them.

5 Can I take photographs?

After baby is born, it is usually possible to take some photos of your baby and partner. If you are taking a mobile phone into theatre just use it for taking photos. Have a chat with your midwife and discuss the best times with your anaesthetist. A member of staff can always guide and help you with this.



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