

# PREPARING FOR ELECTIVE CAESAREAN BIRTH

Maternity ward



## Caesarean section

This leaflet contains information to women who are having an elective caesarean section (planned caesarean). Every year there are approximately 200 children delivered at the Landspítali Hospital by elective caesarean section and in these cases it has been determined prior to the birth process setting in that vaginal delivery is not possible.

Obstetricians will provide consultation regarding the choice of method of delivery and they will assist the prospective parents to take an informed decision. It is important to be aware that no medical operation or surgery is without risk and therefore it is necessary to carefully weigh the risks and benefits of an operation when deciding upon the method of delivery. The women who undergo an elective caesarean section will be admitted to the Maternity ward at Landspítali 22-A. You will be connected with the ward by calling Landspítali and ask for extension 543-1000

**Your caesarean section is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ -day \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_**

If you suspect that the delivery process has begun before the scheduled day of operation, if you are in labour, or if you break water then you should contact the Labour and Delivery ward at Landspítali in phone number 543-3049.

If the caesarean section has been determined because the baby is in a bottom-down position, or it is transverse (laying sideways) you should expect that the baby will be able to turn by itself to a head-down position at any time. In these instances you can expect that the operation will be cancelled and that you will be able to deliver in a natural way.

Most caesarean sections are done under local anaesthesia. This is more advantageous for you and your baby and it enables you to become more of a participant in what is taking place. Under certain circumstances it may become necessary to use anaesthetics. You will get a call from an anaesthetic nurse who will assess and record information about your health. The nurse will explain how the anaesthetic is applied in the operation.

**Interview with anaesthetist will be on \_\_\_\_\_ day \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_**

In order to speed up the recovery and your return home following a caesarean section it is necessary to get well informed of the information that is presented in the leaflet and the educational video about elective caesarean sections.

The educational video has the following url: <https://vimeo.com/148866217>

Please note that we assume that only one family member is going to accompany you to the operating theatre and to the recovery room.

## Preparation

The last weekday before the caesarean section you must check-in before noon at the Outpatient ward 10E at Landspítali on Hringbraut road. There you will get blood samples taken in order to measure blood values. A blood sample will also be sent to the blood bank in case you will need a transfusion. If you live outside the Metropolitan area you can visit your local health care centre for blood sampling. You must inform the staff that the samples are related to an elective caesarean section at the Landspítali hospital the following day in order for the results to be delivered on time.

## Hygiene

The night before the operation and on the morning of the date of the operation you will need to take a shower. It is important to clean the navel and the surrounding area well. You can use regular soap and it is important not to put lotion or oils on the body, you may however use lotion on your face.

Nail polish and jewellery must be removed before the operation and you may not wear make-up

It is recommended that you do not shave or remove pubic hair by other means at least during the last month before the operation. Research shows that it is possible to reduce shallow surgery related wound infections by up to 50% by simply not removing pubic hair during this period. If need be the skin area to be operated on will be shaved before entering the operating theatre.

### **Diet**

We emphasise that you eat healthy high-protein food both before and after the operation. By doing so you will have a determining impact on the way your wounds will grow and you will also promote faster recovery. We recommend that you eat fish and meat as part of your diet every day during the week before the operation.

### **Fasting**

The night before the operation you will have to fast from midnight. This includes all food, drink, tobacco and chewing gum. It is however permitted to drink water and pure juices (such as apple juice) up to two hours before the operation. If you take medication on a regular basis then you must discuss this with your physician during the hospital admission interview, or with the anaesthetic nurse when you receive the telephone call from then and you discuss whether it is advisable to take this medication before the operation.

### **Check-in time**

The check-in time is on the morning of the operation at the Maternity ward of the Landspítali 22A. The ward is located on the (2nd) floor of the women's department, to the left. The ward secretary will call you during the week prior to the operation and let you know what time you should check-in at the ward. It is also important to be aware that sometimes the timing and dating of the schedule for elective operations may be delayed due to unexpected operations that take priority over the elective operations.

### **Smoking**

Smoking has a negative impact on recovery and wound growing. It is therefore important to not smoke at least three days prior to and after the operation.

### **Baggage**

It is necessary to bring the maternity record with you to the hospital. It is a good idea to bring with you a pair of slippers, robe, nightwear and/or other comfortable clothes, in addition to a toothbrush, toothpaste and other toiletries. We want to remind you that the family member also will need nightwear and toothbrush, if the relevant person wishes to stay in the ward after the birth.

You may bring along a pocket camera with you. The taking of photos is permitted in the operating theatre after the baby is born, but please note that you are neither allowed to take photos of the operating theatre staff nor of the operating theatre surroundings. Video recording is not allowed.

You need to bring nappies, towels and clothes for the baby. Don't forget a car child seat for the return trip.

### **Visits**

It is a good idea to let family and friends know that the visiting hours in the ward are from 16:00 hours to 19:30 hours every day of the week. Because the stay in the ward is short it is therefore necessary for you to use this time well in order to learn breastfeeding and to connect with the new baby and to rest, we request that the visiting time hours be respected and that visits are limited to your close family.

### **Painkillers**

It is important for you to procure painkillers so that you can have them ready when you return home. You can buy panodil/paratabs 500 mg and ibúfen 400 mg without prescription. The first three days after the operation you will need stronger painkillers. The ward will obtain these for you while you are hospitalised and they will provide you with tablets to bring with you back home.

### **Returning home**

It is expected that most women return home within a period of 48 hours from the birth of the child and then receive domestic service by a midwife during the first few days. In single exceptional cases one can expect a longer stay at the hospital because of health irregularities and issues with the mother and/or the child, depending on the judgment of professionals.

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