

Preparing for a Scheduled Cesarean Delivery

If your doctor has recommended a scheduled cesarean delivery, here is some information about what to expect. Most of these recommendations are not different from what you would expect for a spontaneous vaginal delivery.

- Talk with your doctor about expectations and questions you have at your prenatal visits.
- A healthy diet will help your body prepare for surgery.
- [Read through the information you received at your Birth Planning 101 and 102](#) sessions with your doctor's RN. If you would like a tour of Brookwood's Childbirth facilities, you can call [844-367-0045](tel:844-367-0045). We encourage you to ask questions at these sessions or at any of your appointments. The hospital also offers virtual childbirth classes, Infant CPR, Breastfeeding Preparations, and classes for dads. If you are interested in these, you can inquire at <https://www.brookwoodwomensmedicalcenter.com/events>. Since you are expecting a cesarean delivery, "preparation for labor" classes will not be applicable.
- We recommend that you and all family members or caregivers who will have contact with your newborn be up to date with routine immunizations. Your baby will not get his or her first shots until several weeks after birth. But some protection from your vaccines can pass to your baby through the placenta. The CDC reminds parents that vaccinations of caregivers and family members offers your baby a "cocoon of protection" until the first newborn shots are given. **Your flu shot, whooping cough booster, and covid-19 vaccine are an important part of your prenatal care.** Pregnant women DO NOT RECEIVE measles, HPV, chickenpox vaccines, or the nasal spray form of flu vaccine. We also recommend COVID vaccination for all household members that qualify (at least 12 years old at this time).

[Read more about immunizations during pregnancy.](#)

[Read more about the COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy.](#)

- Complete Brookwood hospital pre-registration at <https://www.brookwoodbaptisthealth.com/patients/pre-register-for-your-visit>

The night before your delivery:

- Do not have anything to eat or drink after midnight.
- Shower the night before and/or the morning of surgery. Do not shave because this can create small cuts in the skin that can promote infection. The nurse can trim if needed on the day of surgery.
- Have your hospital bag ready with things you will want while in the hospital (toiletries, toothbrush, comfortable clothes/pajamas, etc.). You will need to have a car seat when you take baby home from the hospital.

- If you are planning to breastfeed using a pump and are not sure how it works, you can bring it with you to the hospital. The lactation nurse can show you how to use it.

When you arrive at the hospital:

- You and your support person will remain together through most of the preparation for your delivery.
- You will be taken to a room where you will change into a hospital gown. A nurse will insert an IV and draw blood for labs. They will place wrap your lower legs with inflatable compression sleeves to prevent blood clots. They will explain and ask you to sign permission forms for your delivery. They will put straps on your belly that will monitor baby's heart rate. A dose of antibiotics will be given through your IV prior to surgery. You will be given an antacid medicine to drink.
- A doctor or nurse anesthetist from our anesthesia team will talk to you. This person will be with you, at the head of your bed throughout the delivery, keeping you comfortable and relaxed. You will usually be awake. A spinal or epidural anesthetic is given by injection or small tube inserted into your lower back. The medication keeps your abdomen numb throughout the procedure. [Read more about anesthesia for childbirth](#). If you have not had this type of anesthesia before, be assured that most women tolerate it very well. Most describe it as a little sting and some brief pressure. Usually, your one support person will be allowed in the operating room and will sit by your head. Rarely, there is a situation where you may have to go to sleep for your surgery (general anesthesia). If this occurs, your support person will return to your room.
- A foley catheter (tube) will be inserted into your bladder to drain urine during your surgery. Your abdomen will be cleaned with special antibacterial soap. Then blue material (drapes) will be placed on your abdomen and around you to prepare for surgery.
- C-sections usually take about 30-60 minutes but may take longer if you have scar tissue from prior surgeries.
- The pediatric team will take care of your baby. Don't worry; we have the technology to assure that you won't miss seeing these first magic moments of your baby's life. [Read more about BabyCam](#). If it is safe for the baby and you, the nurse will bring the baby to your support person to hold near you or for you to hold.
- You will return to your room on Labor and Delivery. Your nurse will check your vital signs frequently and press on your lower abdomen to make sure your uterus is firm after surgery. The feeling in your legs will gradually return. After a short while, your new family will get settled in one of our comfortable postpartum rooms for the rest of your stay.

Your hospital stay:

- We use a multimodal approach to pain management. That means there will be several types of pain medication that work in different ways to keep you comfortable. Tylenol and NSAIDs (ibuprofen or Toradol) are an important part of pain management and help to reduce the amount of narcotic pain medication you need. Your nurse will monitor your comfort level after surgery and provide additional medications as needed.
- You may also receive medications for constipation, nausea, itching, and heartburn. Some women will need an injection called Rhogam if your blood type is Rh negative.
- You will have labs drawn to make sure your blood count is stable after surgery.
- Your nurse will assist you to get out of bed the first time. We encourage you to walk, just around the room with your support person or nurse, until you are steady on your feet. When you feel ready, you can take walks in the halls. Moving around helps prevent blood clots and encourages your bowel function to return.
- If all is well, your baby will be right with you in the room just as for any birth. Please notify your nurse immediately if your support person is not present, and you begin to feel unwell and unable to care for your newborn. The lactation consultant will visit you to help you start breast feeding. She can suggest position for nursing that will be comfortable around your incision.
- Most women go home after 2-4 days in the hospital unless there are other complications or medical problems.

As you adjust to your new role, care for yourself too! Accept help from family and friends. You'll need a little extra recovery time after a cesarean delivery. And do call our office if you are concerned about a problem. We look forward to seeing you at your postpartum visit.