



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Enhanced Recovery after Caesarean Birth

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Maternity Services

① For more information, please contact your midwife

Contents	Page
Introduction to the enhanced recovery programme.....	3
Preparations for your Caesarean Birth	4
During Caesarean procedure	6
Recovering after your Caesarean birth	6
At home.....	8
Wound care	8
Visiting times for non-birth partner	9
Tell us what you think of this leaflet	10
Teaching, training and research.....	10
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).....	10
Leaflets in alternative languages or formats	12

Introduction to the enhanced recovery programme

The enhanced recovery programme aims to improve the care provided to women and birthing people (bp) and decrease the length of hospital stay following planned caesarean birth. We are trying to naturalise the process and improve the patient experience and satisfaction. This means that you will be offered to go home after 24 hours (next day) following planned caesarean births.

You have been given this option because we anticipate that your caesarean birth will be straight forward, and you wish to go home at the earliest opportunity. The benefit of early discharge after surgery is minimal disruption to your family life, and there are not known to be any increased risks for you or your baby.

Preparations for your Caesarean Birth

At antenatal clinic - once the decision for a caesarean delivery is made, you will be provided with **caesarean birth and enhanced recovery patient information leaflets**, and you will be assessed for whether or not you are suitable for next day discharge.

Day prior to surgery:

At pre-assessment you will be given advice on pre-operative fasting and a prescription for some medication you will need before your caesarean.

When you attend for pre-operative assessment, you will be seen by the anaesthetist and obstetric team. A blood test will be taken for a group and save sample, so we know what blood group you are and have a recent sample near your surgery date.

Pre-operative Fasting Guidance

Evening prior to surgery;

- You can eat a carbohydrate- rich supper (such as rice, pasta or pizza).
- At 10.00 pm take an antacid.
- You can eat light diet (such as toast and cereal) until midnight.

Day of surgery:

- You are advised to take **No more food after midnight and continue to drink water only.**
- At 6.00 am take your prescribed or given antacid and Metoclopramide (anti sickness tab) 10 mg.
- At 7.00 am you can drink **one** of the following to enhance recovery:
Black tea or coffee (max 400mls), **and no milk**
Water and Cordial i.e. clear fluids (max 400mls)
No more food or fluid after 7.00 am.
- Bring a dressing gown that will keep you warm and inform staff if you feel cold. It is important to keep warm to reduce the risk of postoperative complications.

If your surgery is at York hospital, please attend ward G2 promptly at 7.30 am. If you are going to be delayed, please call 01904 726869.

If your surgery is at Scarborough hospital, please attend the Labour ward promptly at 7.30 am. If you are going to be delayed, please call 01723 236869 (option 3).

During Caesarean procedure

The majority of elective caesarean births are straight forward, but like any other significant operation there are risks involved. If there are any complications during your caesarean it may not be appropriate for you to go home the next day. Your surgeon will inform you if this is the case.

Recovering after your Caesarean birth

You should begin to eat and drink as soon as you feel able to after the caesarean, this will help your body to recover quickly. A caesarean section is a major abdominal operation and pain following the operation is to be expected.

You will usually have been given a painkiller by suppository whilst in the operating theatre and you will be offered regular pain relief on the postnatal ward. It is recommended to take regular painkillers to prevent the pain from building up and to promote quicker recovery.

As soon as possible after your operation, the staff will help you to have a wash and sit out of bed. This is important to reduce the risk of thrombosis (blood clots). Once you have got up and out of bed and after six hours from your operation, your catheter can be removed, and the midwife will make sure you are able to pass urine properly.

You will be given assistance to care for and feed your baby on ward if you need it and a midwife will check you are happy with this before you are discharged. After a caesarean section, you should avoid lifting anything heavier than your baby for the first six to eight weeks to protect your healing incision.

To lift your baby safely, get close to them, keep your back straight, and lift with your arms and legs rather than your stomach muscles. Use smooth, controlled movements and carry the baby close to your body. We recommend you accept help from others with tasks like lifting the pram or your baby in a car seat.

At home

You can take painkillers for as long as you need them. You will be visited by a community midwife the day after you go home. If you have any concerns or questions when you are home, you should contact us by phoning the labour ward of the hospital where you had your operation.

Wound care

You should wash hands before and after touching your wound. We advise you shower instead of bathing and gently clean the wound with plain water and pat it dry with a separate clean towel. Wear loose-fitting clothing and cotton underwear and support the wound when coughing or laughing with a rolled-up towel. Watch for signs of infection, such as increased pain, redness, warmth, swelling, or discharge, and contact your midwife or doctor immediately if you notice any of these symptoms.

Contact numbers

York Hospital Triage:	01904 726869
York Hospital Labour ward:	01904 726869 (option 3)
Scarborough Hospital Labour ward:	01723 236869 (option 3)

Visiting times for non-birth partner

Day of Surgery

3.00 pm to 8.00 pm (partners only before 3.00 pm).

Day after Surgery

1.00 pm to 8.00 pm

These are the normal visiting times for our hospitals.

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Clinical Governance:

yhs-tr.patientsafetymidwives@nhs.net

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

Owner	James Wright, Consultant Anaesthetist
Author	Dr Chandra Pun, Specialist Registrar
Date first issued	December 2015
Review Date	September 2028
Version	6 (amended October 2025)
Approved by	Obstetrics and Gynaecology Clinical Governance Group
Document Reference	PIL989 v6.2
© 2025 York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.	
All Rights reserved.	