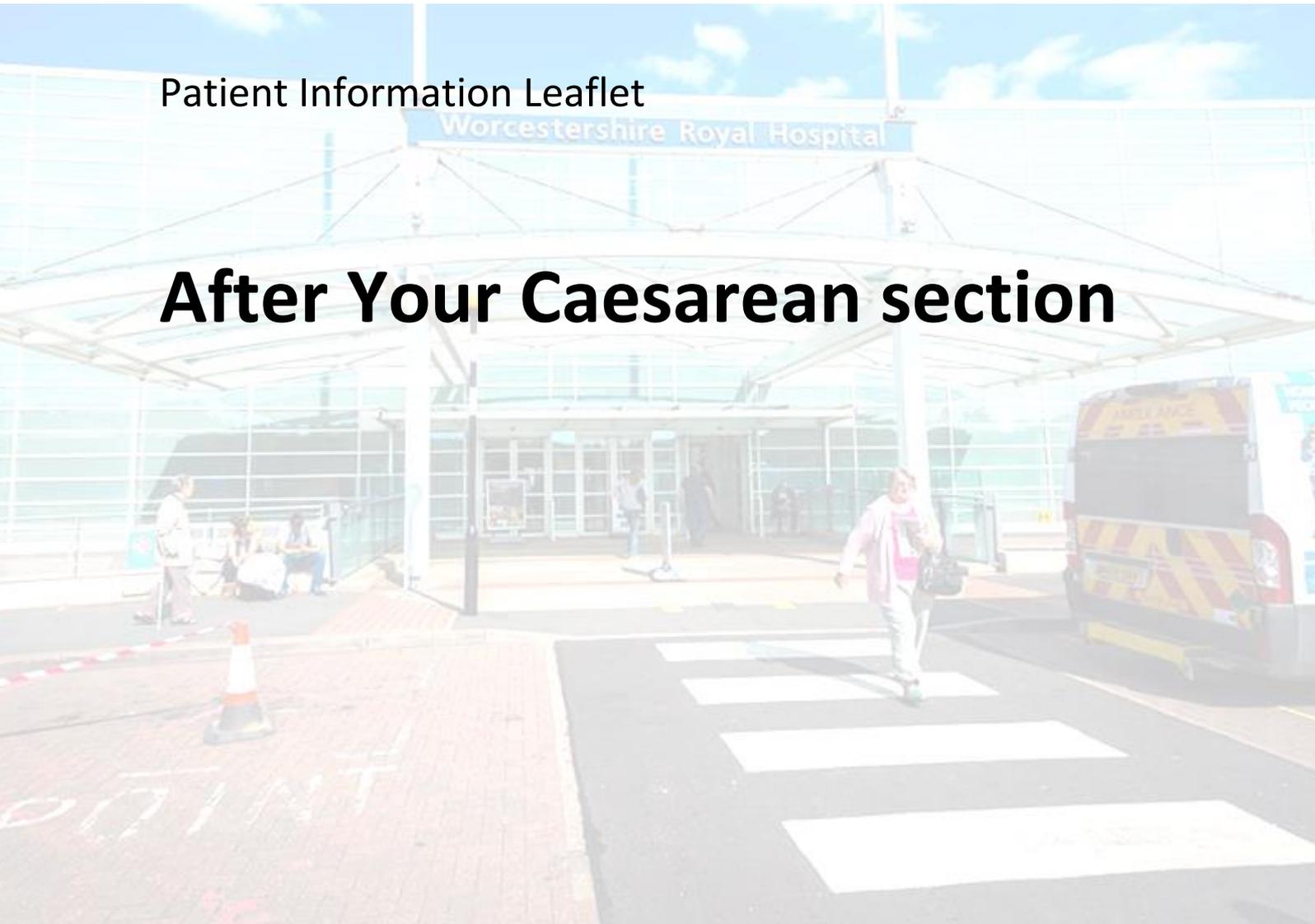


Patient Information Leaflet

# After Your Caesarean section



Whilst you are in hospital after your Caesarean section the maternity team will support you to recover as quickly as possible. During this time our job is to ensure you are going home well and able to take care of yourself and your baby.

If you have any questions about your birth we encourage you to discuss these with the midwives and doctors caring for you while you are still in hospital, but if you would rather wait until a later date please ask your midwife to make an appointment for you.

## 1. Before discharge

Before you are discharged from hospital, we will need to be sure of the following:

- You are healing well from the operation and in control of any pain
- You are eating and drinking normally
- Passing urine without a catheter
- Moving and walking about without assistance
- We will also need to ensure that your baby is fit and well enough to go home, and that you and your partner are confident to feed and look after your new baby.

These points will give you an idea of what to expect whilst recovering from your caesarean section:

### Urinary Catheter

A catheter tube will be inserted into your bladder during your caesarean section and will be removed once you are able to get out of bed and get to the toilet unaided. You will need to produce an adequate sample of urine for us before you go home. There are some circumstances where you may go home with the catheter for a short while. Your obstetrician will discuss this with you if appropriate.

### Pain

Following your operation, you can expect to have some pain. This will be helped by taking regular painkilling tablets, as advised by your midwife. There is also another leaflet you should be given with further information about pain relief. We recommend taking pain relief regularly, rather than waiting until you need it, to help improve your comfort. You will initially be given help with getting out of bed, getting to the toilet/shower and feeding your baby.

### **Eating and Drinking**

You will be encouraged to start drinking water and eating light foods as soon as you enter the recovery room after your operation. Once you return to the ward you should be able to eat and drink normally. If you are feeling sick you can ask your midwife for some anti-sickness medication which may help.

### **Caring for yourself**

You should have a shower or bath daily and keep your wound clean and dry. You should also change your sanitary towel frequently. Your loss should gradually decrease with time but if you have any concerns then please discuss these with your midwife or GP.

### **Your wound and stitches**

You may have some bruising along the scar, but this will soon disappear. Often the wound is closed without the stitches being visible; this means that you do not have to have the stitches removed. If there are white beads at the end of your stitches, you will usually need them removed by the community midwife approximately 5 days after delivery.

A midwife will check you regularly to ensure your wound is healing well and there are no signs of infection. Your dressing usually needs to be removed after 1-2 days but your midwife will explain how to look after your wound once you are at home. Once you are home, if you notice your wound beginning to look red, swollen, or oozing any discharge, please contact your midwife or GP. It is important to have this reviewed

### **Your stay in Hospital**

The length of time you spend in hospital will vary between individuals. Some people are ready to go home the following day, whereas others need prolonged stays to manage unforeseen problems with either you or your baby. This will be a discussion with the team looking after you on postnatal ward.

### **Going home**

We advise that you have some help at home for at least the first 2 weeks. Once you are home you should continue to rest and take any prescribed medication that you have been given so that you can recover properly.

The community midwife will visit you the day after you go home and will explain the routine of home visiting for you and your baby. She will ensure that you are healing well and are coping at home. It is common to feel up and down, and to get tired easily in the early days.

### **Returning to normal activities**

You may start to do your usual activities at home when you feel more like yourself. There are no time restrictions as everyone is different, however remember you have had a major operation and should rest more frequently. You should avoid heavy tasks such as vacuuming, standing to iron for long periods and heavy housework until 6 weeks after your caesarean.

### **Sex**

You can resume sexual intimacy at any point; there is no right time. However, most women wait until their wound has healed and the blood loss has stopped. You must always use contraceptives if you do not want to have another baby quickly, as you can conceive any time after the birth.

### **Driving**

There are no fixed timescales to suggest when it is safe for you to start driving again after a caesarean section. Most people are fit enough to drive by 6 weeks, but many are fit sooner than this. If you feel that you are fit to drive sooner than 6 weeks you should contact your GP and make your insurance company aware.

### **Future pregnancies**

Just because your baby was delivered by caesarean section this time, it does not mean you will have to have a caesarean section should you decide to have another baby.

75 out of 100 women who have had one caesarean section will have a normal birth in the future. If you become pregnant again your doctor or midwife will discuss your birth plan with you during the antenatal period.

### **Follow-up**

Your GP will be notified that you have had a caesarean section and of your discharge home.

If you have any concerns about your own or your baby's health (especially problems with your breathing or passing urine, swelling in your calves, excessive bleeding) then you should contact your community midwife or GP in the first instance.