

After your Caesarean Section



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After your C-Section

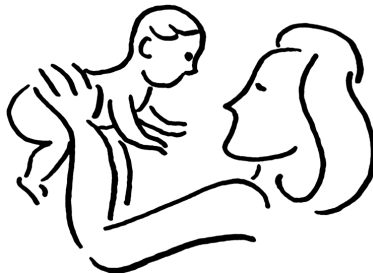
In order to move about comfortably and to give your spine and pelvis support your tummy muscles need to be working well. For this reason it is important to allow your scar time to heal after a c-section before you begin any vigorous exercise or heavy work.

This advice and the exercises described are designed to help you re-gain your mobility and strength after a c-section birth. Try to do the exercises little and often but also make sure you rest when you can.

What to avoid: First 6-8 weeks

- Abdominal exercises which involve your Oblique's (twisting movement)
- Full sit ups
- Twisting with pulling and lifting action
- Lifting anything heavier than your baby
- Driving

After your 6-8 week check, and if all is well you can gradually begin doing more as long as your tummy is comfortable



Practical Advice to help your Recovery

Sitting comfortably



Make sure your back is well supported with pillows, especially the lower back.

Try to avoid slumping forwards with your shoulders, you may find bending your knees up helps take the strain off you back and tummy

Supported Coughing

After a c-section it is important that you still take deep breaths and cough when you need to in order to get the phlegm off your chest. As you get more mobile, walking on the ward, this will become easier but to begin with you can try taking:

2-3 deep breaths every hour followed by a HUFF, as if you are steaming up a window, and then a cough.

You stitches/staples are very secure but you may find supporting you tummy and wound gently with a pillow as you huff and cough more comfortable.

Initially coughing may be uncomfortable but this will ease in the days following your C-section.



Practical Advice to help your Recovery

Feeding Baby



Always sit well back on a supportive chair, your feet should be able to touch the floor in order to support your posture. Use pillows to support your back and to rest your baby on your lap to bring them into a comfortable feeding position.

You can then use pillows to support your own arms.

A feeding pillow can be helpful when on the move when you are not always able to use such a supportive or comfortable chair.

Getting out of bed

Avoid pulling yourself up into sitting from laying flat on your back. Instead first roll onto your side with your knees bent up and together.

Then allow your feet and lower legs to slid off the side on the bed while you use your hands/arms to push yourself into sitting on the edge on the bed.

As you do this try to gently pull up your pelvic floor muscles.

Practical Advice to help your Recovery



Poor Posture



Correct Posture

Posture

During pregnancy your posture goes through many changes. In some ladies this can lead to aches and pains where previously they had none.

After a c-section it is important for your healing to begin standing and walking upright as soon as possible, try to avoid walking in a hunched over position

To begin with stand in a relaxed position, think about pulling in your lower tummy muscles and spreading your weight evenly through the heels and balls of your feet.

Next imagine there is a helium balloon attached to the top of your head which floats you upwards gently towards the ceiling. Your chest should lift upwards naturally at the same time.

Now roll your shoulders back until your shoulder blades rest naturally on the back of your ribs, do not hold them rigidly, but allow them to 'hang' down your back.

Try to avoid postures such as the one on the right (imagine the bucket is your baby's car seat!) as this can lead to a painful pelvis and spine. Instead carry the object with 2 hands, in the middle and at the front.



Exercises to do after a C-Section

Circulation

Either when you are in bed or sitting up in a chair, pump your ankles up and down 10 times. Repeat this every hour for the first few days after you have had your baby.



Pelvic Tilts

Lay on your bed with your head supported on a pillow and your knees bent up. Your feet should rest flat on the floor and you should breathe steadily throughout the exercise.

Draw in your lower tummy muscles around your bikini line as if doing up tight jeans. As you do so tilt your pelvis backwards and flatten your lower back against the bed. Hold for 2-3 secs and repeat 10 times. Try to do this 3 times a day.

**This should not be painful but may feel a little strange to begin with.
Do not push through pain, only do as many**



Your Pelvic Floor

Your Pelvic floor is a group of muscles which span from your pubic bone to your coccyx, their function is to prevent leaking of urine and faeces and allow you to control when you go to the toilet. They are also responsible for supporting your pelvic organs, keeping them inside you. They also work along side you tummy and spinal muscles to maintain your **CORE STABILITY**.

Affect Of Pregnancy

During pregnancy your pelvic floor muscles stretch and drop down a little under the weight of your growing baby, this can weaken the muscles leading to problems with continence during pregnancy or after birth and is the reason why it is just as important to do your pelvic floor muscles even though you have had a c-section.

The pelvic floor works in 2 ways, it has fibres which are always working to support you internal organs, and it has fibres which switch on when you cough/sneeze etc to prevent you leaking. For this reason we should exercise the pelvic floor with a mixture of fast contractions and longer holds.

Aim for the following...

10 fast, on/off contractions
One 10 second hold
5 times a day

Each contraction should be as good as the last, stop when they start feeling weaker, and only hold for as long as you can feel it.

For Example you may begin with 6 fast and one 4 second hold which you can build on as you get stronger

When You Go Home

Getting home: As a passenger in a car you may find it comfortable to place a pillow between your tummy and the seatbelt.

Tiredness: Following abdominal surgery it is usual to be tired. For the first few weeks try to concentrate on looking after your baby and accept help when offered especially if you have a toddler at home too!

Walking: Short distances to begin with and build up gradually

Driving: You are advised not to drive for 6 weeks. When you do, make sure you feel strong enough and try short journeys first.

Returning to exercise and sport: This should not be rushed, your body will take time to recover both from your c-section and from your pregnancy. After you 6-8 week check, if all is well you can begin doing more exercise as long as it is comfortable. Contact sports should be the last thing you return to and should be done gradually, it is normal to find you are physically less fit to begin with so take your time.