Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Elective (Planned) Caesarean Section

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Patient Information

Maternity

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Introduction

The birth of a baby is an exciting and special time. We are looking forward to sharing this experience with you. This information leaflet will take you through your elective Caesarean journey step by step. You and your baby will be supported throughout this time. If there is anything you are unsure about, please do not hesitate to speak to your midwife or a member of the team.

Antenatal Consultation

A consultation will take place with a doctor around 32-35 weeks' gestation. You will sign a consent form, and the doctor will send an electronic referral to our elective Caesarean booking team. This referral will contain an agreed 'Safe birthing gestational range' which will be explained and confirmed with you by the doctor. Date ranges are agreed in line with clinical guidance and safe, effective care planning. The specific date of your elective Caesarean will only be confirmed 1 week before. Please be aware, our elective Caesareans are completed on Tuesdays and Thursdays. You will be offered screening for MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus), which involves obtaining 2 swabs (from nose and groin).

Information Prior to Admission

You will be notified of your surgery date within 1 week beforehand by telephone. You will also be informed of your date for a pre-operative appointment. The pre-operative appointment will be undertaken at either the Thomas Linacre Centre or Leigh Infirmary. A routine blood test will be taken by a Maternity support worker. If you do not attend for pre-operative blood sampling, your elective Caesarean will likely be delayed on the day of surgery, while the team take blood and wait for the results.

Eating and Drinking

Eating: You should not eat for 6 hours prior to your surgery. You will be informed what time to stop eating prior to your admission.

Drinking: You can sip small amounts of water to quench your thirst whilst you are waiting for surgery. It is important to follow the instructions you are given regarding fasting and hydration in order to avoid a delay in your surgery on the day.

Time of the Operation

You will be notified of the time you need to arrive on the Maternity ward, not the time of your surgery.

What to Expect on the Day of Your Birth

Arrive on the Maternity Ward, Level 3, Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, at the time you have been given. You will be seen by the midwives who will be in theatre with you; they will undertake your observations and pre-operative paperwork. You will also be seen by the surgeon and anaesthetist. Your named birth partner is welcome to attend with you. Additional visitors can attend between 2pm and 8pm, with a maximum of 3 visitors at any one time. If you have other children, they are welcome to visit during this time but must be under direct supervision of another adult visitor.

Wear loose, comfortable clothing; this is recommended as it may be easier to change into and out of, before and after the procedure. Ensure you bring a light dressing gown and slippers, as you will need these to walk to the theatre. Remove any jewellery and leave it at home. Any jewellery that cannot be removed will be covered with tape on admission. Ensure you bring hats and nappies for your baby/babies.

If you plan to breastfeed, we encourage ‘colostrum harvesting’ from 37 weeks, please discuss this with your community midwife or the infant feeding team on: wwl-tr.maternityinfantfeeding@nhs.net for further information. Please ask your named midwife for further information and support with this. If you plan to formula feed, please bring an adequate supply of ‘first infant milk starter’ packs. A baby typically feeds between 8-12 times in 24 hours, and you and your baby will be in hospital for a minimum of 24 hours.

Unfortunately, there are no toilet facilities for your visitors on the ward. Toilets can be found on level 2 by the hospital entrance. Visitors must not use any of the toilets on the ward and must not sit or lie on the beds. These requests are in place to reduce infection risk.

Your catheter will be removed around 6 hours after your surgery, and you will be supported to mobilise and change into your own clothes. Early mobilisation is important to reduce the risk of developing blood clots in your legs and lungs and aids a faster recovery.

Essential Items to bring on the day

- Your green antenatal notes, along with the completed orange anaesthesia sheet.
- A list of medications, including frequency and dosages.
- A light dressing gown and slippers/slip-on footwear.
- Expressed colostrum if you have chosen to breastfeed, or a ‘first infant milk starter’ pack if you have chosen to formula feed.
- We also suggest you bring comfort items like a book, headphones, personal music, a pillow or any other personal item to help pass the time, please do not bring valuables into hospital.
- Please note the space around the bed might be limited for large luggage, although we do have a lockable small cupboard next to each bed for personal items such as mobile phones etc.

Elective Caesarean Midwifery Team

We have a specialised midwifery team allocated to care for birthing people undergoing elective Caesareans. The team are experienced theatre midwives, with a passion for improving the experience of Service users undergoing Caesarean birth. Your allocated midwife will discuss the plan on the day with you, including:

- what to expect in theatre, ‘skin to skin’, infant feeding wishes, Vitamin K for newborns and safe sleeping advice.

They will be happy to answer any questions you have. If you have not received a date for your Caesarean within 7 days of the end of your date range, please contact the team via e-mail on electivesections@wwl.nhs.uk. This inbox is not monitored 24/7, but we will endeavour to respond to your queries as quickly as possible.

In the event that you need to e-mail us, please include your personal details, such as full name, date of birth and your NHS or Hospital number if you know this. Please do not contact us to discuss dates before 7 days of the end of your date range. Please be aware, members of staff at our antenatal clinics, maternity ward, triage and delivery suite are unable to assist you with surgery dates.

To Conclude

We hope this information leaflet is useful and that you have a positive elective Caesarean section birth experience with us. Please do not hesitate to contact us on electivesections@wwl.nhs.uk with any questions or concerns.



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