

Caring for your Caesarean (C-section) Wound

Information for Patients

How long will my dressing stay in place?

At the time of your operation, your wound will be covered with a pad and film dressing.

It can be left in place up to 7 days and any fluid from the wound will be absorbed into the central pad and show up as a dark mark, this is normal.

If it there is too much wound fluid leaking, or any reaction to the adhesive, the midwife or nurse will gently remove the dressing, wash your wound and reapply a fresh dressing.

Can I shower with the dressing on?

Yes, the dressing is shower-proof as long as the edges are still sticking to your skin. You can wash or shower as normal but do not sit in a bath as the dressing is likely to come off.

After a shower make sure that you carefully pat the area around the dressing dry using a clean towel which is not used by other members of the family.

What happens when the dressing comes off?

If you have stiches or staples these will be removed on day 5. If you have dissolving sutures then your dressing will be removed on day 7 but you will not have sutures removed. Your wound should be covered with new skin.

You still need to clean and dry it carefully. Lift up any skin folds over the wound and use a mirror if necessary to check the stitch line or scar for changes.

Make sure your underwear does not rub against the wound or cause any unnecessary friction on it.

What can I do to help my wound heal?

1) Rest and Exercise

To encourage healing you need a balance of rest and exercise. Try to rest when your baby is resting and put your feet up when you are feeding. The midwife or physiotherapist may give you specific exercise, it is important to do these.

2) Pain relief

Remember to take your painkillers as you need them. This will allow you to move more easily which helps to strengthen your wound as it heals.

3) Nutrition

Wounds need protein, fats, carbohydrates and vitamins to heal. These can all be obtained from a healthy and varied diet.

This should include:

- Vegetables and fruits
- Proteins such as nuts, fish, meat, pulses, cheese or eggs
- Carbohydrate foods such as bread, pasta, potatoes or rice.

4) Stop smoking

Even one cigarette reduces the blood flow and oxygen to the wound and stops nutrients being absorbed from your intestines. It also increase you risk of infection and has been shown to give poorer cosmetic results for your scar when it does heal. You are 4 times more likely to give up smoking with help.

How can I tell if it is infected?

Just over 1% of C-section wounds develop an infection. This is equivalent to 1 in 100 women.

To reduce the risk of infection remember to wash your hands after going to the toilet and nappy changing and especially before and after touching the skin around your wound.

Signs that you might have a wound infection are:

- Increasing redness of skin surrounding the wound
- Increasing swelling of surrounding area
- Increasing pain at wound site (especially at rest)
- Dressing soaked with green or yellow discharge (pus) or bleeding from the wound

- Smell coming from the wound that is offensive
- Developing a higher than normal body temperature
- Feeling generally unwell

Who can I contact if I am concerned?

If you have any of signs of infection or general concerns please contact your Midwife or GP or Health Visitor (if more than 10 days since you had your baby)

Useful Web Links/Helplines

Smokeline (free): 0800 84 84 84 or
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/helplines/smokeline>

Smokeline is an advice and support service for anyone trying to stop smoking in Scotland.

Mon-Fri 8am - 10pm, Sat/Sun 9am to 5pm

Interpretation and Translation

Your GP will inform us of any interpreting requirements you have before you come to hospital and we will provide an appropriate interpreter. If you are having this procedure as an existing in patient, staff will arrange interpreting support for you in advance of this procedure. This leaflet may be made available in a larger print, Braille or your community language.