

# POSTPARTUM CAESAREAN RECOVERY CHECKLIST

## Caesarean Recovery

If you gave birth via Caesarean section, you can expect to experience a few additional discomforts during the postpartum period: extra fatigue, tenderness around your incision, and gas buildup in your upper chest (which you may feel as pain in your shoulder area). Here are tips on coping with these common post-Caesarean complaints.

- If you need to spend the first day or two after your Caesarean recovering in bed (or you are too weak or nauseated to walk during that time), do some leg exercises to prevent blood clots from forming in your legs. Bend and stretch your knees, or press your knees into the bed and then relax your legs.

### *Mother Wisdom*

Although your incision will heal within six months of the delivery, don't be surprised if you experience some numbness in the area until the nerves regenerate (something that typically happens about six to nine months after the birth). You should also be prepared for the fact that your scar may continue to be bright red for up to a year. (It will fade in time, but sometimes the fading process takes longer than you'd like.)

- Learn how to minimize pain around your incision site. Hold a pillow against your incision when you cough, sneeze, or laugh in order to provide some gentle support to your midsection. Avoid heavy lifting and limit the number of times you trek up and down the stairs in a day. Keep your incision clean and dry, and expose it to air as often as possible.
- Don't be alarmed if you experience pressure and uncomfortable urination for a week or two afterward as a side effect of your surgery. This problem will disappear as your body heals.
- You will likely have a few problems with gas pains, too. Mother Nature's reaction to abdominal surgery is to call all intestinal activity to a halt. That's why it's normal for women who've been through a Caesarean section to experience uncomfortable gas pains during the first three days (until the intestinal tract starts working again). Try taking short walks, changing your position frequently, and rocking in a chair.



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These techniques will help to get rid of any trapped gas, thereby relieving the gas pains that are causing you so much grief.

- It will take time for your incision site to heal. During that time, you will want to keep tabs on your incision to make sure it is healing normally. Get in touch with your health-care provider right away if you develop a fever or if the incision becomes red or swollen or oozes pus. The internal stitches that you received will dissolve on their own. External staples, on the other hand, are generally removed after four to six days. In the meantime, it's okay to shower with stitches or clips. (Drip plain or soapy water over the incision and gently pat dry with a clean towel.)

Be prepared to take it easy for a while. You need plenty of rest in order to heal properly, so make caring for your baby and caring for yourself your top priorities for at least the first few weeks. It will likely take you four to six weeks to recover from a Caesarean. Don't expect yourself to bounce back as quickly as other mothers you know who have given birth vaginally

