

Breastfeeding after having had a caesarean birth

When your baby is born by Caesarean Section it is important that he has peaceful time skin to skin with you. The midwives will help you to do this as soon as is possible after the birth. Your baby will be given to you quickly after he is born and you won't have much room to hold him - there is a screen up over your tummy so really you only have your chest area to rest your baby on! It will be much easier when your midwife moves you onto a comfortable bed on the Delivery Suite where you can lie on your side and snuggle your baby in with you.

Now your baby can nuzzle at your breast and you can admire him. You'll have time together now to rest and breastfeed.

Many mothers who have had a Caesarean Section say that it was difficult lifting and handling their baby. They recommend using a clip on cot that is a three sided cot that clips onto your bed frame. You can slide the baby into this cot and pull him over to you without lifting. (In hospital some of the electric beds do not take a clip on cot so you'd need to ask for an ordinary pump-up bed.)

You will be talked through bedsharing with your baby during your stay in hospital to ensure that you are aware of the benefits and the risks. If you have had a Caesarean Section and then have a strong painkiller injection, you will be advised to put your baby into his cot as you will be sleepy. Mothers who have had Caesarean Sections often talk about asking for pain killers before it gets too painful as this helps you to move around more easily.

As you will have a drip in the back of your hand for the first day, it can be hard to lift or hold your baby. You may find it easier to lie down on your side to breastfeed. You may need to ask your partner or a midwife to help you at the right moment as it is difficult to see the baby open his mouth wide and tilt his head back. Sometimes it can help to ask them to put their hand over your hand which is behind your baby's shoulders to bring him into you at the right time. The advantage of breastfeeding lying down is that you can make yourself comfortable and rest whilst feeding.

This is a basic information sheet although GBSN hopes that it answers some of your questions. If you have further questions you may like to phone a Breastfeeding Counsellor. A list of their phone numbers may be found in the pink leaflet that you brought home from hospital "where to find support when breastfeeding". National Breastfeeding Helpline numbers are on the website. For convenience your baby may be referred to as "he". Written by Elizabeth Mayo, 2009.

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When you have had a Caesarean Section you often find that you spend quite a lot of time skin to skin with your baby or having him very close by. This way you can watch for his feeding cues to help you to anticipate when he wants a feed. If he is close all you have to do is to bring him a bit closer rather than lift him in with you.

When you come to a GBSN breastfeeding support group after having had a Caesarean section, we will be happy to help you by lifting your baby's car seat, carrying things out to the car for you etc - -please ask us.

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