

Caesarean Section Wound Care

Patient Information – Maternity Services

The care of your wound during your hospital stay and after discharge from hospital will depend on:

1. The type of dressing.
2. The type of sutures (stitches or staples). Dissolving stitches are the most commonly used method of closing the wound. Staples are rarely used.
3. The size of your wound.

Types and care of wound coverings/dressings/stitches

	YES	NO
'Island' dressings, eg. Opsite® Post-Op Visible and Hydrofilm dressings can remain in place for up to 5 days but should not be removed for at least 2 days after surgery.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hypafix tape – remove dressing 10 days after surgery.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pressure dressing – this is a thick dressing and firm tape applied over the lighter, existing dressings (see above) if there has been some increased bleeding soon after the operation. This pressure dressing should be removed by your attending health professional, before having your first shower and within 12 hours after surgery. It needs to be removed and assessed prior to you leaving Christchurch Women's Hospital.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PICO negative pressure dressings may be used in some cases. You will be shown how to care for this if you have one. It will normally be removed by Day 7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dissolving stitches do not need to be removed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For non-dissolving stitches or staples your LMC will usually undertake the task of removal. It is possible that you may need to make an appointment with your General Practitioner (GP) or Practice Nurse for removal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before discharge from the hospital you will be given a device to take to your health professional which will assist in stitch or staple removal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Removal of staples/stitches is usually at 5-7 days after your Caesarean Section and will be due on this date:/...../.....		

Ask your attending health professional to assess you if you are concerned about your dressing or wound.

Care of your wound

Observe the wound for:

- Increased redness or swelling or painful bruising
- Bleeding
- Increased pain
- Any separation of skin edges or open areas
- Discharge
- Offensive smell
- Hot to touch

If you observe any of these changes or have a temperature of 38°C or more **or** feel cool, shivery or unwell please contact your attending health professional LMC, Private Obstetrician (if under the care of one) or GP for advice, following discharge.

Once your dressing has been removed your wound does not require a covering.

Continue to shower as normal but ensure your wound is dry by patting gently with a towel.

Pain

This is normal

- Women usually experience some pain for a few days following a Caesarean Section. You will be given pain medication in hospital and a prescription for medications to use at home when discharged.
- Tell your LMC or GP if the pain increases or if your wound is still sore after 3-4 weeks.
- There can be some numbness over the wound area that may last several weeks to months.

Preventing infection

It is important to protect yourself from infection in the following ways:

- Sanitary pads **only** should be used – **no tampons**
- Showering and sponging is safe
- No long soaking in a bath
- Avoid intercourse for 4-6 weeks, or as per surgeon's advice

NB: do not use spas or public swimming pools for six weeks.

If you experience any of the symptoms mentioned above, you should contact your LMC or GP. If your phone call to a GP is made after hours, you may be directed to an After-Hours Surgery.

If you do visit your GP or After-Hours Surgery, please take a copy of your discharge letter(s) with you.

Following discharge

If you have any problems **in the first 24 hours** after discharge contact your LMC for advice.

If you are advised to go to hospital, get someone else to drive you and take your discharge letter(s) with you.

Please note: Postnatal care up to 6 weeks postpartum is provided by your LMC. If you attend your GP, then there will be a charge as per usual consultation fees.

For urgent matters, call an ambulance (phone 111)

For more information about:

hospital and specialist services, go to www.cdhb.health.nz | your health and medication, go to www.healthinfo.org.nz