

## On the Ward

Whilst it's only natural for you to have some pain and discomfort after your Caesarean section, we want you to feel comfortable enough to be able to move about and start looking after your baby the day after your operation.

It may sound rather cruel to get you up and about so soon, but we know that it helps to stop a number of complications.

People get much better pain relief if they take their painkillers on a regular basis rather than waiting for the pain to build up and then ask for a painkiller.

You'll gradually be able to build up the amount you can do each day but remember that it's important to have enough rest as well.

The last thing to mention is the "third day blues" which often affects women whether they've had a Caesarean section or not. It's a very normal reaction and there's nothing wrong with having a good cry if that's how you feel.

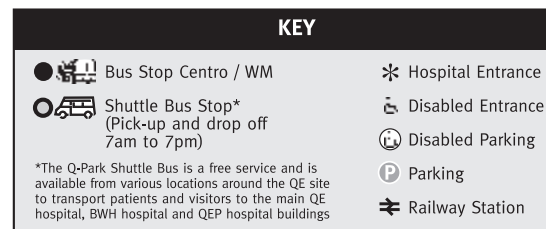
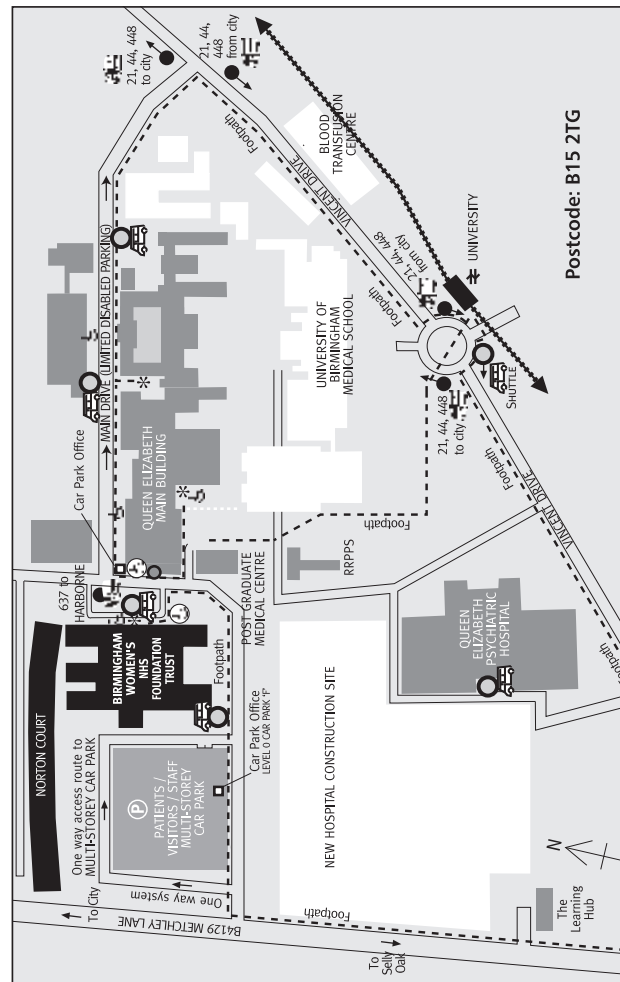
## Going home

By the time you're ready to go home you'll be feeling much better although there will be times when your tummy still feels quite tender, particularly if you're tired. So you'll probably find that you still need to take painkillers at home for anything up to a fortnight after your Caesarean section.

If you've been given your own painkillers whilst in hospital, you can take the remaining tablets home with you (but not the morphine). If not, the doctor will prescribe some for you.

Please remember that all of this is only a guide and that there are no right or wrong amounts of painkillers to take (as long as you take them within the prescribed limits). The most important thing is that you have what is right for you.

Finally, in the unlikely event that your pain doesn't seem to be getting any better, please phone your community midwife or GP.



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# Pain Control after Caesarean Section

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Patient Information

## Introduction

Many people find that coming into hospital for an operation is a stressful experience and they're often worried about the amount of pain that they'll have afterwards.

Although, we can't say exactly how you'll feel, many women have told us that the kind of pain they get after a Caesarean section is more like a dull ache and discomfort than a sharp pain.

We've also found that even after the same operation, no two women have the same amount of discomfort or need the same number of painkillers. In other words, pain is a very individual thing.

But although everyone's experience of having a Caesarean section is different, there are certain similarities as well. This leaflet tells you about the sort of pain you might feel after your operation and the different types of painkillers we can give you to help you feel more comfortable.

## What sort of pain will I have?

Many people find that the first 24 hours is the most painful time. The discomfort is mainly low down and at the front. After a Caesarean section, it's usual to have a catheter. Some people find this a bit uncomfortable and restricting but it's usually taken out within 24 hours.

On the day after operation, many people describe the discomfort as a dull ache - rather like a period pain, but by the second or third day you should be feeling much more comfortable.

As well as the discomfort of the operation, you might find that you have 'after pains' which again, are a bit like a period pain. These can be quite sharp, particularly if you're breast-feeding. But they do settle, so don't let that put you off feeding the baby yourself!

The third thing that often causes discomfort after a Caesarean section is 'wind' pain. This can also be quite sharp and often starts within 24 hours of your operation. It's the type of pain that comes and goes but it usually settles within 24 hours.

Peppermint, either as sweets or tea, can help to relieve the pain.. Alternatively, the midwife can give you some peppermint water.

## How will my pain be treated?

There are 3 different types of painkillers we can give you. But the first thing to say about them is that they are all safe for you to take even if you're going to breastfeed your baby.

**The first type** is morphine. This is a strong painkiller and you may need it for anything up to 48 hours after your Caesarean section.

A couple of hours or so after your operation, it's likely that you'll need an injection of morphine. After this, you'll probably have oral morphine.

The injection can sometimes make you feel a bit sick and sleepy. So we usually give you an anti-sickness drug with the morphine to try and stop this happening. The oral morphine can also make you a bit sleepy, but it seems to cause much less sickness.

People sometimes worry about becoming addicted to morphine. This is very unlikely to happen and you'll find that as the pain gets better you simply won't need it anymore.

**The second type** is an aspirin-like drug called diclofenac (also called Voltarol) which is a small, brownish tablet. It's suitable for mild to moderate pain or discomfort and it's better to take it regularly (1 tablet 3 times a day) for the first 3 days. After this, you might find that 1 in the morning and 1 in the evening is enough.

If you can't take aspirin or drugs like Nurofen or Brufen, it's likely that you'll be given a codeine-like drug and paracetamol rather than diclofenac.

**The third type** is paracetamol and this is a white tablet. It's also suitable for mild to moderate pain or discomfort. You can have this as well as diclofenac.

Some people may be given a supply of their own painkillers to keep with them on the ward. Others will have to ask the midwife for them. Somebody will explain which system applies to you.

## In Recovery

After your Caesarean section, you'll go to the Recovery Room on Delivery Suite and it's likely you'll be there for about 2-3 hours.

If you've been awake for your Caesarean section, it's likely that you'll be quite comfortable for the first hour or two. After this, you'll probably start to feel some discomfort. So when this happens, please tell your midwife or recovery nurse so that she can give you a painkiller. It's much better to treat the discomfort sooner rather than later, so do ask for something before the pain builds up.

If you've had a general anaesthetic (gone to sleep), you'll be aware more quickly of your pain or discomfort. Again, it's important that you tell your recovery nurse or midwife so that you can have a painkiller at the earliest opportunity. Do ask for something before the pain builds up.

**Don't be afraid to say that you're in pain because it's important that you feel comfortable before you go up to the ward.**