



C section recovery: 5 tips on recovering well

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PREGNANCY TIPS AND ARTICLES

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For mums that have just had a C-section delivery, getting assistance from your family can help you have a smoother recovery. Learn tips on how to care for your wound and recuperate.

If you have just delivered your baby through a C-section, you might be in some pain and discomfort. Here are some tips to have a smooth C section recovery!

Congratulations on delivering your precious bundle of joy into the world! After 9 long months, it has been quite a journey. And if you have just experienced a C-section, or Cesarean section (which is the delivery of a baby through a surgical incision in the mother's abdomen and uterus)¹, then you might be in some pain.² The procedure is considered to be a major abdominal surgery which requires the use of anesthesia. Once the anesthesia wears off, you will experience pain around the incision - which we know can be quite frustrating! Typical of most surgeries, you will also feel tired and sore afterwards.

Look on the bright side Mum, because right after the surgery, you will finally meet your little one! Just remember these tips after your surgery so you can enjoy a smooth c section recovery process:

1. Wait a little before getting out of bed

You've just delivered a baby, you superwoman! Now's your time to just lay back and let the people around you - whether it is your husband, family members or the nurses - take care of you. You will be eager to hold your baby and walk around. But just take it easy, at least for the first day, before getting out of bed. Sarah Wagner, MD, FACOG, of the Loyola University Health System in Maywood, Illinois, recommends gradually increasing the amount of activity you do around two weeks postpartum. "Being active allows normal body functions to get back to their routine, as well as decreasing the chance of a postoperative complication,"³ she says.

2. Get help at home

Don't forget that you still have stitches where the incision was made and it will probably only be removed within a week after delivery. So, it is important that you have someone to help you at home for the first week or two and that includes lifting your baby up from the crib. You should also avoid stair climbing and lifting during this time. It's time to enjoy being a total queen for a few weeks!

3. It's okay to take pain meds!

No one expects you to fight through the pain without a little assistance! The incision will hurt and it will do so for a while. You will be given oral anti-inflammatory medication to take home with you. These meds don't interfere with breastfeeding, so take them. You can expect cramping to occur too (from your uterus shrinking back to its original size), and the pain of that may be intensified by the incision. Breastfeeding can trigger the cramps as well, so if you can't handle the pain, keep taking your meds!

4. Try different nursing positions

When you are nursing, you may need to try different positions for holding and feeding the child so that less strain is put on your healing abdomen. Perhaps the most comfortable nursing position is one in which you sit up and your child lies facing you at your side. This helps to keep the child's weight off your abdomen.

5. Keep that wound clean for better recovery!

In the first two weeks of c section recovery, a lot of focus is on the incision. That is, after all, the source of your pain. You will want it to be as clean as possible, so that it recovers as smoothly as possible. While taking a shower, let soapy water pass over the wound (but do not scrub). Then pat at it gently and air it out a little to dry.

Generally, your wound will be mostly healed around a week. But look out for signs of complications. For example, if you develop a fever or if the skin surrounding the incision turns red or it starts oozing green or pus-colored liquid, or it becomes hard or painful, call your doctor. These could be signs of infection.

Once your wound has healed, about six weeks after delivery, you can use scar-reducing ointments to help with the appearance of the scar. The colour will likely fade, but it will be there. For most c-section mothers, the scar is horizontal and falls under the bathing suit line, making it very subtle.

So with all these tips in mind, you are on your way to a smooth recovery. After all, a happy mummy makes a happy baby too!

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