



# A Patient's Guide to Surgery

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## Caesarean Section

Your Surgery Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The hospital will call with your arrival time 1-2 days  
before your surgery date.

# Having a Caesarean Section at Quinte Health

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Quinte Health is dedicated to making our patients feel safe and comfortable during their hospital experience. Throughout your surgical journey you will be cared for by many members of our team—nurses, doctors, learners, volunteers, and many more—all of whom have an important role in supporting you and your family before, during and after your surgery. As a team, we strive to provide care based on our guiding hospital values: *imagine it's you, value everyone, we all make a difference, and stronger together.*

We know surgery can be a scary time for you and your family. This booklet is designed to help answer your surgery-related questions and hopefully help ease some stress during your time in hospital.

This book has been organized to mirror the surgical experience.

1. **How to Prepare for Your Surgery:** includes things to tell your Obstetrician, pre-surgical testing, and information that is important for your safety.
2. **Your Day of Surgery:** what to bring, your arrival, and what to expect in hospital.
3. **After Your Surgery:** includes information about the recovery room and pain medications.
4. **Pre-Surgery Checklist:** Please use this checklist to make sure you are properly prepared for your day of surgery.

There is a section at the end of this booklet to write down your questions and notes. Please bring this booklet with you on the day of your surgery so you can talk to your care team.



**Throughout the booklet you will notice this triangle symbol. These sections are especially important and need your attention. Please review carefully.**

# Preparing for Your Surgery

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## Things to Tell your Obstetrician:



### Medications

- Make sure you tell your Obstetrician what medications you are taking. Please include any medicines or herbal products that you purchase yourself or that are prescribed to you. Please let your Obstetrician know about anything that you ingest, inhale, or apply to your skin. It is very important to tell your Obstetrician if you are taking **Aspirin (ASA) or blood thinners (like heparin injections)**. These will need to be stopped before your surgery.
- Tell your Obstetrician if you take medications for Diabetes such as insulin or metformin.
- Your Obstetrician also needs to know if you use **alcohol** or **recreational drugs** because these can change how you recover.
- Tell your Obstetrician if you normally receive antibiotics for surgery or dental work because of a heart murmur, heart valve replacement, joint replacement, or another condition. This helps them decide what antibiotics you might need for surgery.
- Please tell your Obstetrician if you have recently been prescribed any new or temporary medications, such as antibiotics for a recent infection or injury.



### Sleep Apnea

It is very important to tell your surgeon if you have sleep apnea. If you use a breathing machine (a CPAP), you **must** bring it with you the day of surgery.



**If you experience an injury or develop a sore throat, fever, cold, or COVID 19 within a few days before your surgery, please call your Obstetrician.**



**If for any reason, you cannot keep your appointment, please call your Obstetrician's office**

# Pre Surgical Testing

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During your prenatal visit with your Obstetrician, you will receive instructions for any tests you might need before your surgery. They will be completed at the hospital on the day of your surgery.

## Pre-Surgical Assessment Phone Call

You may receive a phone call from a Pre-Surgical Assessment Nurse before your surgery. The nurse will review what you can eat and drink before surgery and answer any questions you might have.



You will be given instructions on what medications to take before your surgery. **Write these down as you will need to follow these instructions exactly.**

# Important for Your Safety



For your safety during surgery and while under anaesthesia, it is very important that you follow the following instructions carefully.

## Eating and Drinking Instructions



**Do not** have **any food** after midnight on the day of your surgery.



You are allowed to drink **clear fluids** on the day of your surgery until **2 hours before your surgery**. Clear fluids include: water, apple juice, ginger ale, Gatorade, **black** tea or **black** coffee (**no milk or creamer**).



Drink 500 mL of clear juice or Gatorade 2 hours before your surgery.

If you do not follow these eating and drinking instructions exactly, **your surgery may be delayed or cancelled**.



We recommend not smoking for **48 hours before** your surgery. There is no smoking on Quinte Health property. Nicotine replacement options can be discussed with your Obstetrician.



You will not be able to drive home after your surgery. **Please make the necessary arrangements for someone to take you home**. Driving after caesarean section should be discussed with your Obstetrician.

# Keeping You Healthy

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## Preventing Infections

Surgical site infections occur when harmful germs enter your body through your surgical site. Infectious germs are everywhere—on your skin, in the air and on things you touch. Most infections are caused by germs found in and on your body.

### What Your Surgical Team is Doing to Prevent Infections

- Proper hand-washing and scrubs
- Cleaning your skin prior to surgery using an antiseptic solution
- Wearing uniforms, masks, caps, sterile gloves and gowns
- Covering you with sterile drapes during surgery
- Keeping you warm
- Using the right dressings to keep your surgical wound protected
- Administering antibiotics prior to surgery

### What You Can Do to Prevent Infections

- Have a shower or bath the morning of surgery
- Remove all jewelry
- Do not shave your surgical site before surgery. If required, nursing staff will assist you with this on admission
- If you smoke, try to stop, cut back or consider nicotine replacement
- If you are prescribed antibiotics take them all (even if you feel better)
- Care for your wound as instructed
- Eat healthy foods and get plenty of rest

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## Preventing Blood Clots

After surgery, there is a small risk of blood clots forming in the veins of your legs. You can reduce the risk of blood clots by moving around as early as you can after surgery and doing exercises as instructed even when you are resting.

Speak with your Obstetrician or nurse about what exercises you can do following surgery.

It may be recommended that you receive a blood thinner injection after surgery if you have certain risk factors.

# The Day of your Surgery

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## Before Your Arrival:

### Do

- ✓ Bring a copy of your pharmacy medication profile that lists all the prescription medications you are taking
- ✓ Take a shower or bath the morning of your surgery. Wear clean, comfortable clothes to the hospital
- ✓ Bring a proper storage container for your hearing aids, dentures, glasses or contact lenses. Glasses and dentures will be removed just before surgery
- ✓ Follow the **exact** instructions on what medications to take and not to take before your surgery. These instructions are given to you during your pre-surgical phone call
- ✓ Bring your CPAP (if you have sleep apnea)

### Do Not

- ✗ **Do not** bring valuables to the hospital. The hospital is not responsible for lost items.
- ✗ **Do not** wear contact lenses. These could damage your eyes while under anaesthesia
- ✗ **Do not** wear any makeup, fingernail or toenail polish
- ✗ **Do not** wear scented products (perfumes, colognes, scented soaps, lotions, etc.)
- ✗ **Do not** wear **any** jewelry- this includes earrings, rings, necklaces, body-piercings and tongue studs

**If you need interpretation services, make sure you have told your Obstetrician and the Pre-Surgical Assessment Nurse.**

**Quinte Health uses a virtual program for interpretation services.**

# Your Arrival

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- Please arrive at your scheduled time. This prevents a delay in your surgery. Be aware that your surgery time may change due to emergencies. Please be aware that your arrival time is not your surgical time. The assessment prior to surgery takes time and you will be required to wait. Please bring a book or activity with you.
- Bring your Health Card **and** any Quinte Health booklets provided to you by your Obstetrician. **PLEASE** ensure that your Health Card is **valid**.
- If you have insurance, please bring your extended health coverage/insurance card. This information should be provided to Patient Registration.
- You may want to bring a book or magazine to read while you wait. If you bring a device, please ensure you have your own charging cable. The hospital is not responsible for lost items.
- Only 1 care partner is permitted prior to scheduled surgery, during surgery and in the recovery room.
- For more information on what to bring for your hospital stay, please refer to the Quinte Health website at <https://quintehealth.ca/care-service/maternal-child-program/having-a-baby-at-quinte-health/>.

## Parking

Visitor/patient parking is available in front of the Main Entrance and WCA building.

Parking can be paid each time you visit by the hour, day pass or a discounted multi-day pass can be purchased if frequent visits are expected.

- For hourly and daily parking, bring your parking ticket with you into the hospital and pay **before** returning to your vehicle. Payment machines are in the main entrances and accept cash and credit cards
- Multi-day passes can be purchased at the Patient Registration desk on Quinte 3

**Parking is not allowed in fire routes.** Drivers are only permitted to stop in these areas to drop off or pick someone up. Unattended vehicles may be ticketed or towed

## Patient Directions

1. Enter at the Main Entrance (Sills wing)
2. Go down the corridor to the right, follow the signs to the Quinte elevators
3. Turn left to follow the signs to the Quinte elevators
4. Proceed to Level 7: Once you get off the elevator on Level 7, press the call button to speak to a staff member for access to the unit
5. A staff member will register you for your surgery at the main desk



6. Take a seat in the waiting area as directed. A nurse will come meet you there.

### **What to Expect**

- A nurse will bring you into an assessment room. You will be asked to change into a hospital gown; your clothes should be packed with your belongings.
- Your Nurse will complete a health assessment. This will include asking you questions (about your procedure, allergies, medications, when you last ate or drank, etc.), start an intravenous (IV) line, and perform any required tests.

### **The Operating Room (OR)**

- Each member of the OR team — nurses, Anaesthesiologist and Obstetrician — will come talk to you and review your hospital chart.
- When the OR team is ready, one of the team members will bring you from the assessment room to the OR—first confirming your name using your armband.
- Your care partner will be provided with appropriate OR clothing and will be asked to wait in the hallway until the surgery starts, at which time they be asked to join you in the OR. If you require a general anaesthetic your care partner will be asked to wait in the recovery room.
- In the room you will sit on the OR bed while you receive your regional anaesthetic and be covered by warm blankets after you lie down as the operating room can be cold.
- After you receive your regional anaesthetic, a member of the team will insert a urinary catheter to drain your bladder during and after surgery. It will be removed while you are on the postpartum unit.
- Before starting the surgery, the OR team will perform a *Surgical Safety Checklist*. This is another important safety protocol. You will be asked to verify your name, birthdate, allergies, and procedure. This might feel repetitive, but it is an important part of keeping you safe.

### **Newborn Care**

- A nurse will be in the OR to care for your newborn at delivery
- Delayed cord clamping will be performed in the OR and support persons may be offered the opportunity to cut the cord if clinically appropriate
- Your newborn will be brought to the infant warmer briefly for initial newborn assessments and then brought to you and your support person for the remainder of your surgery provided there are no concerns with their well-being
- After your surgery, if you are alert and able, the newborn will be placed on your chest for skin-to-skin **prior** to leaving the OR. If you are unable to perform skin-to-

skin, your care partner can be offered the opportunity. A button up shirt is recommended for this purpose.

## **Recovering after your Surgery – The Post-Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU)**

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After your surgery you will be moved to the PACU (Recovery Room). It is normal to feel a little bit ‘groggy’ or ‘hazy’ after surgery, and especially if you received any sedating medications.

You will be cared for in the PACU by a nurse who will keep a close eye on you.

Throughout your stay:

- The PACU nurse will ask you questions and complete postpartum assessments.
- You may be getting oxygen through a tube in your nose or a mask; the nurse will ask you to take long, deep breaths.
- You may experience some nausea or pain after your surgery. The team in the OR has already given you medications to try to decrease this and the PACU nurse will also provide medications to relieve discomfort.
- Warm blankets will be provided to keep you comfortable.

The length of stay in PACU varies depending on how you are feeling and the care you need. This can take approximately 1 to 2 hours.

## **Visitors**

**Visiting restrictions may be put in place due to public health measures.**

We understand having your family and/or friends with you in hospital is important. As you move through the different phases of your surgery we have different rules around visitors, these are in place to keep you and the other patients safe.



**Before, during and in the recovery room:** Only 1 care partner is allowed to be with you before, during and after your surgery. This care partner must be one of the care partners planned for your postpartum stay. All other visitors should wait at home until you have been moved to the postpartum unit.

**On the postpartum unit:** One consistent care partner is permitted at all times of day. After surgery you can identify 2 additional visitors, who are permitted between the hours of 0800-2000, with a maximum of 2 visitors at the bedside at one time.

**No** visitors below the age of 16 are permitted.

Visitors **MUST NOT** visit if they are feeling unwell (fever, cough, sore throat, vomiting, etc.).

Visitors must follow the current masking requirements of the hospital and may be provided with gown or gloves to keep patients safe. **Please clean your hands before and after visiting a patient.**

If you feel you require an exception to the visiting policy this should be discussed with your Obstetrician prior to your surgery.

**Patient and staff safety is our priority;  
if visitors are asked to leave for any reason, please respect this request.**

### **Pain Medications**

While you are recovering from your surgery you may experience pain. This is a normal response to surgery. Sometimes pain is mild and easily tolerated, other times it can be disabling, but usually it is somewhere in between. The staff will assess your pain throughout your stay, using a pain scale. 0 means you are not having any pain, while 10 means it is the worst pain you have ever felt. The goal is to keep pain at a level that does not prevent you from performing normal postpartum activities.

**The goal is to use the right medication to control your pain and help you recover, while not placing you at risk of serious and/or dangerous side effects.**

There are many ways that we will treat your pain: rest, early movement and medications. In some cases, your physician will choose stronger pain medications to help control your pain.

If stronger pain medications are prescribed to you after surgery, they should be used if alternative forms of pain control (rest, over-the-counter medications etc.) are not enough to control your pain. All pain medications are intended to improve your pain enough so that you are able to do your day-to-day activity, **but not decrease your pain to zero**. Some pain is part of the healing process and should be expected during your recovery. Most pain medications that are ordered by providers are safe to use while breast/chest feeding. If you have concerns, talk to your health care team.

**Side Effects to Expect:** Constipation, nausea, dry mouth, itchiness, sweating, and dizziness. Some people are more sensitive to the side effects of opioids and may need a lower starting dose or more careful monitoring.

**Risks of Using Pain Medications:** Many people have used stronger pain medications such codeine, fentanyl, hydromorphone, morphine, tramadol and oxycodone without problems. However, serious problems that can happen include overdose and addiction. It is important to follow the instructions on the prescription, use **the lowest possible dose for the shortest possible time**, and to be aware of signs that you are getting too much medication (experiencing overdose). Avoid alcohol, recreational drugs and benzodiazepines (examples include: alprazolam (Xanax), clonazepam (Klonopin), lorazepam (Ativan), diazepam (Valium)) while taking stronger pain medications.

### Signs of Overdose

**Stop taking the drug and get immediate medical help if you have the following while taking opioids:**

- Severe dizziness
- Inability to stay awake
- Hallucinations
- Heavy or unusual snoring
- Slow breathing rate

**Your family member or caregiver needs to call 911 if:**

- You can't speak clearly
- They can't wake you up
- Your lips or fingernails are blue or purple
- You are making unusual heavy snoring, gasping, gurgling or snorting sounds while sleeping
- You are not breathing or have no heartbeat

Consider picking up a Naloxone kit (NARCAN) from a local pharmacy to keep at home.



**Safe Keeping and Disposal: NEVER** share your medicine with anyone else. Store it securely in your home and keep it in its original container. Take any unused medicines back to your pharmacy for safe disposal.

# Pre-Surgery Checklist

Please use this checklist to make sure you are properly prepared for surgery

## 10 Days Before Surgery

Talk to your Obstetrician if you are taking **Aspirin (ASA), Blood Thinners (heparin) or Insulin**

Make arrangements for someone to drive you home after discharge.

**Your surgery may be canceled** if you do not have arrangements made

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## Night Before Surgery

**Do not** have **any food** after midnight the day of your surgery

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## Day of Surgery

You can drink **clear fluids** until **2 hours before your hospital arrival time**. **What are clear fluids?** *water, apple juice, ginger ale, Gatorade, black tea or black coffee (no milk or creamer)*

Drink **500 mL** of juice or Gatorade **2 hours before** your surgery

**Take** only the medications you have **been instructed to take**. Consider keeping a medication diary

Take a shower or bath the morning of your surgery. Do not shave the operative site

Remove contact lenses

Remove **all** jewelry (including rings, earrings, body or tongue piercings)

Remove makeup, fingernail or toenail polish

Wear clean, comfortable (i.e. loose fitting) clothes to the hospital & a mask

Bring your valid Health Card (and your insurance card - if you have one)

Bring a proper storage container for your glasses, hearing aids or dentures.

Glasses and dentures will be removed just before surgery

- Bring your CPAP (if you have sleep apnea)
- Bring your community pharmacy medication profile with you if you are taking prescription medications
- Bring only the belongings you will need for surgery and the immediate recovery period. Additional belongings and your car seat can remain in your vehicle until they are needed
- Bring this booklet

**DO NOT BRING VALUABLES OR JEWELRY TO THE HOSPITAL. THE HOSPITAL IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST ITEMS.**

**Instructions or Notes**

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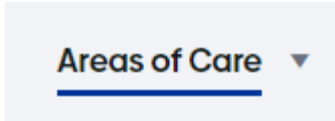
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## Questions?

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1. Read through this whole booklet and write down any questions you have
2. Ask your questions during your Pre-Surgical Telephone call
3. Visit our website at <https://quintehealth.ca/> for more information on having a baby at Quinte Health and for a virtual tour of the unit. A list of what to bring for your hospital stay is available on this section of the website. If you require a printed copy, talk to your Obstetrician

Select  found at the top of the website and choose Maternal

Child Program for more information.

## Feedback

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The Quinte Health Maternal Child and Surgical Programs are committed to providing exceptional care and we welcome opportunities to hear about your experiences while under our care. Understanding your experiences will allow us to learn what we are doing well and where we can improve.

If you have questions, feedback, a compliment or a complaint about the care you or your family member received. Please contact our Patient Experience Specialist by telephone, letter, or using the link on our website.

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