



UpSpring®

ESSENTIAL

C-SECTION RECOVERY GUIDE

**What to Expect During A C-Section,
Unique C-Section Recovery Methods,
FAQs and More**

Use this helpful guide to find answers to your questions and best practices for a healthy recovery.



CONGRATULATIONS!



Hey there, momma! Congratulations on your newest bundle(s) of joy! We're sure you're over-the-moon excited, but if you've had, or are having, a C-section, you'll want to take extra good care of yourself to ensure you have a speedy and healthy recovery.

A good mother is not defined by the process of labor, but by the sacrifices and love she gives to her children.

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PLEASE NOTE: This guide is only meant to give you a general overview of the common needs, symptoms and options for your C-section recovery. In no way should this be taken as medical advice. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult your physician.

IS THERE A STIGMA ATTACHED TO HAVING A C-SECTION?

Birth is hard. Period. It doesn't matter how your baby enters this world, it does not negate the fact that you gave birth and grew a tiny human inside of your own body for nine long months! Don't let the glamorous Instagram photos fool you into thinking that pregnancy or birth are easy, because for the majority of women, it is an incredibly trying experience. Your body is not your own. ***You are a vessel for life and making sure your baby makes it safely earth side is your number one priority.***

Before the rise of modern medicine, it was common for women to write out their wills when they found out they were pregnant because, again, birth is hard.

It would seem in recent years that the most common stigma attached to C-section births is two-fold: One, people assume that it's the "easy way out" and two, that the women did not actually "give birth."

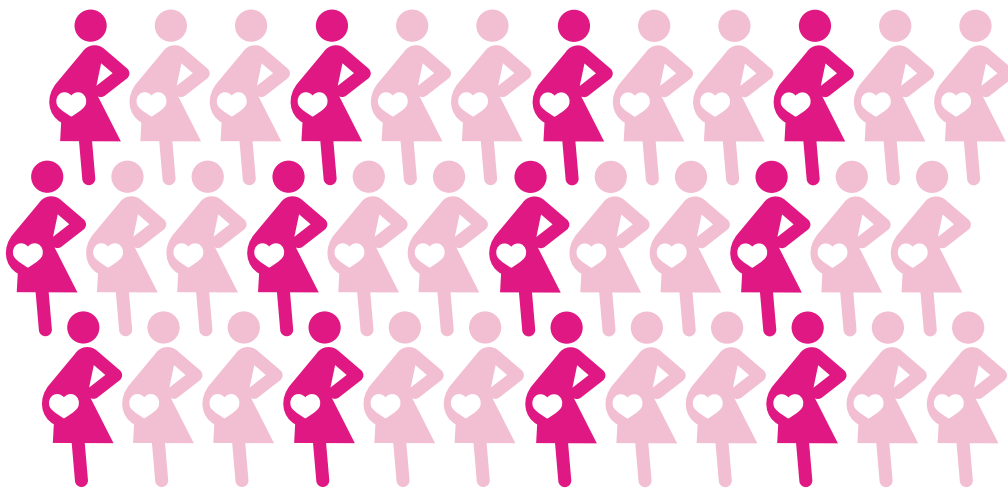
There is nothing further from the truth. Having a C-section is an intense abdominal surgery and can have many complications, including a higher maternal mortality rate compared to a vaginal birth(1). In America, about 1 in 3 women have a C-section and of that 33%, only about 4% are planned C-sections or VBACs(2). That means, the majority of women who have a C-section did not go into labor planning for a C-section. However, due to complications during labor, like fetal distress, excessive blood loss, or other complications, the doctors of those women were able to make the life-saving call to perform a C-section.

It's our hope that people, especially other moms, stop shaming each other and start supporting one another. Sometimes life throws you curve balls, and this is especially true with labor and delivery. Being a mom is hard enough, without all the mom shaming and guilt that is already put upon us. We are incredibly grateful that C-sections, or belly births, exist because without them, many of our dearest friends and family would not be here today.

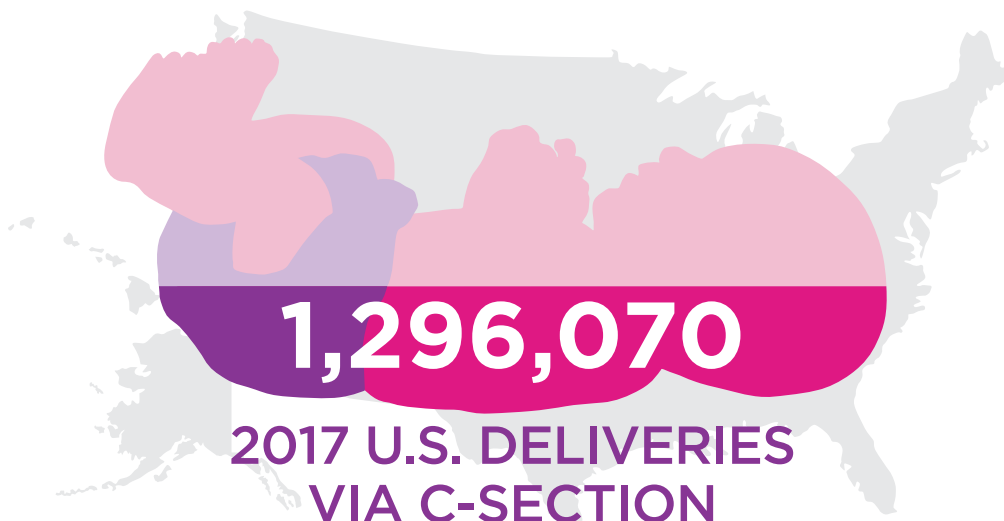
Momma, no matter how your baby came into this world, you birthed them. You gave up your own body so that someone else could have life and that is the only stigma we want to see attached to C-section births.

C-SECTION STATISTICS

C-SECTION
ONE OF THE MOST
COMMON SURGERIES
IN THE U.S.



1 IN 3 2017 U.S. DELIVERIES
ARE BY C-SECTION



1,296,070

2017 U.S. DELIVERIES
VIA C-SECTION

WHAT HAPPENS DURING A C-SECTION?

How long does the procedure take?

The length of the procedure will depend on the situation. In the case of an emergency C-section, where the mother or baby's health might be at risk, it takes about two minutes to go from incision to delivery. An emergency C-section is usually called for when the mother has been in labor for an extended period of time and the doctor has seen any number of possible issues like problems with the placenta or umbilical cord or maybe the baby is too large to fit through the birth canal. A planned C-section birth usually takes between 10-15 minutes. Both types of C-sections will include about 45 minutes of delivering the placenta and suturing of the incisions after delivery.

What happens after the C-section

You can expect to spend at least three days in the hospital following a C-section, although some women may need to stay longer. You'll need lots of rest and the hospital staff will be working around the clock to make sure you and your baby are healthy. Don't be afraid to ask for assistance with anything you need, even if that's simply more rest—you've earned it.

On the first day following the delivery, you'll likely receive a low dosage of morphine to manage your pain. You will be very tired, groggy, and possibly nauseated. Heavy bleeding is common, and you will go through many menstrual pads. Your incision site may be itchy. You might have to wait 24 hours or until you pass gas before you can eat, as the doctors will want to be sure that your intestines are functioning healthily. A nurse will teach you how to cough safely and will show you how to do exercises which help to expand and clear the lungs.

On the second day, you might transition to an oral painkiller. The catheter will be removed, and you will need to walk to the bathroom. This will seem like quite a feat, but it is good to be on your feet a little bit. Have a nurse or family member help you. Your intestines will be doing a lot of "waking up" and you may feel strange sensations in your gut.

Typically, on or around the third day, you'll be discharged from the hospital. If you don't feel physically prepared yet, you can ask to be reevaluated and stay in the hospital until you're confident that you can safely return home. You'll be sent home with prescriptions for pain medication—have a family member pick these up as soon as possible because you will likely need them soon.

What is C-section recovery like after I leave the hospital?

Expect to need help—and lots of it—once you get home. If nobody offers, ask for support from your partner, parents, in-laws, and friends. If you're worried that you may not have enough support, hire paid help if you can afford it. Lining up meals from friends is a great way to remove stress and there are some good websites where people can sign up such as <http://www.mealtrain.com> or <http://www.mealbaby.com>

You'll likely be given a prescription for pain meds and a stool softener before you leave the hospital. You may need prescription painkillers for up to a week after surgery, gradually transitioning to over-the-counter pain relievers. (If you're breastfeeding, don't take aspirin or drugs containing acetylsalicylic acid.)

Drink plenty of fluids to help you avoid constipation. Your incision will likely feel better day-by-day, quite noticeably so after several days, though it may continue to be tender for several weeks.

Call your caregiver if you have signs of an infection, including:

- Warmth, redness, swelling, or oozing at the incision site
- Worsening pain or sudden onset of pain
- Any fever (even if your incision looks fine)
- Foul smelling vaginal discharge
- Pain or burning when urinating, the urge to pee frequently when not a lot comes out, or urine that is dark and scanty or bloody
- Menstrual-type bleeding that continues past the first four days after delivery
- If you have any signs of a blood clot, such as severe or persistent pain or tenderness and warmth in one area of your leg, or one leg that is more swollen than the other

How is my C-section healing inside?

- There are two stages to C-section healing—internal (inside) and external (outside). During a C-section, two incisions are made—one to the outer abdomen, and another to the uterus itself. After delivery, both the uterus and abdomen will receive stitches. The internal stitches on the uterus will dissolve after a few days. The uterus can take longer to heal than the external stitches, so make sure to be careful even after your external incision is fully healed! You may still be healing inside from your C-section even if you're not experiencing any pain or discomfort, so avoid direct pressure (like having your new baby stand or sit on the incision site) for several months after the delivery.

- o **Some mothers report** taking up to 9 months for their internal incisions to heal fully, so make sure to avoid doing anything that may slow your internal healing. The gentle compression and added support of C-Panty can help to protect your internal incision from tearing or re-opening, and can reduce the time it takes for your C-section to heal inside.

What will my C-section incision be like?

- o During the recovery process, the incision site will be sore and often itchy. Your scar will be raised and puffy but will shrink within the coming weeks—silicone sheeting (such as the built-in silicone panel in C-Panty) can assist in reducing itching and burning and promoting proper scar healing. Any pressure on the abdomen will be painful at first but will become less intense and less tender as the recovery progresses.
- o In a randomized controlled clinical trial, Drs. Chiefetz, Lucy, Overend, et al. found that abdominal surgery patients that used abdominal compression, such as that provided by C-Panty compression panties, **experienced less pain** than patients who did not use compression. Abdominal compression also helps new mothers get back on their feet more quickly. That same study found patients using compression were able to walk significantly further and reported a more positive experience throughout the healing process.

C-section Scar Recovery Timeline	
Week 1: Inflammatory Stage	Active phase where cellular “workers” rush into the area to begin C-section recovery. This is where you really feel that you had surgery!
Month 1-3: Proliferation Stage	Initial rebuilding period. New collagen and capillaries form. Swelling may still be fairly active. These are the days that you feel your C-section recovery progressing but still need to take it pretty easy!
Up to Year 1: Remodeling Stage	Remodeling Stage: “Finish carpenters” are tidying up. Collagen has reformed, the c section scar is maturing. This is where you feel better and better, but have days where you still remember that you had surgery. Many moms report c section recovery leaps at 3 months and 6 months. Common complaints at this time in the C-section recovery phase are itching or occasional soreness around the scar after active days. Those with keloids or symptomatic scars can have a longer remodeling period.

C-SECTION FAQs

Here are some questions that may be top of mind, from going stir crazy to when you can be intimate with you partner again are all answered below!

When can I drive after a C-section?

After having seven layers of tissue cut open, including your abs, you may want to heed the common advice to avoid driving for at least five to six weeks. This is both for your sake while your muscles heal, but also for the safety of other drivers. If you are unstable in your core, you can risk losing control. Most moms play this one by ear so listen to your body as it heals.

Is it difficult to sit up after a C-section?

It's one of the most surreal feelings to try and sit up on your own after having a C-section. Immediately after and up to two weeks after your C-section, it can be painful to sit up on your own. While you're in the hospital, take advantage of the hospital bed, which can help prop you up, and the nursing staff. When you get home try rolling on your side, use pillows to prop yourself up and ask family members for help getting up.



What is the best way to take care of my incision after C-section?

You've just had major surgery and your incision is likely going to be sore for a while. Your doctor may prescribe pain medications, or you can try over the counter pain relievers. Along with pain relief, you'll want to keep the C-section incision site clean and hydrated. C-Panty, offers medical-graded compression and a patented silicone panel for improved scar healing. Below is a new mom before putting on the C-Panty and after putting it on. C-Panty's built-in compression immediately helps swelling and reduce the 'C-shelf' that often occurs after a C-section.

When can I have sex after my C-section?

Even though your baby did not enter the world via the birth canal, the key here is giving your cervix enough time to close. This typically takes 6 weeks, but some women feel confident being intimate sooner. If you experience burning or other pain, consult your doctor as it may indicate you're not healing as you should.

After giving birth, your body will need a lot of time to heal. Please remember that it took you 9+ months to grow this little miracle. Give yourself just as much, if not more time to "bounce back" after a C-section. Expect that you'll have 'good' and 'bad' days (sometimes within the same day), especially in those first few weeks after delivery as your hormones fluctuate and your newborn is adjusting to life on the outside. Be sure to surround yourself with supportive people like your

partner, friends and family. If you really want to speed up recovery after birth, be patient with your body but also be vigilant about using proper compression and postpartum clothes to reduce swelling and improve healing.

How long does it take for my belly to begin to flatten?

It takes six weeks of the uterus to return to pre-pregnancy size. Since a C-section entails an incision in the uterus (where your clothing and intimates rest) your bellow may be swollen a little longer than after a vaginal delivery.

Do you bleed vaginally after a C-section?

Yes. You can expect to experience some vaginal bleeding for up to two weeks after delivery. The bleeding is a result from where the placenta was attached to the womb. Bleeding may be heavy for the first few days and darker in color. As time progresses, bleeding will be less and color should lighten.

What's a 'C-shelf' and how can I avoid it?

The ever-discussed C-shelf is the little (or not so little!) bulge some women experience around their C-section incision. First, for the moms frustrated at two months that they have a shelf, remember that you are still in the stages of wound healing as well as have weight changes from pregnancy and loose skin. These factors do get better over time as we know incisions and tissues mature over a year. That being said, a scar, the unavoidable result of surgery, and its more dense and adherent tissue properties can cause some pocketing around it which can show fat deposit more. Loose skin, genetics, recurrent surgeries and body type all contribute as well.

C-Panty smooths the c-shelf by providing targeted front of pelvic compression to help tuck that bulge in without the all over compression of a control panty.

How soon can I be active again?

While it's essential to get plenty of rest once you're home, you also need to get up and walk around regularly. Walking promotes healing and helps prevent complications such as blood clots.

Of course, you shouldn't overdo it. Start slowly and increase your activity gradually. Since you're recovering from major abdominal surgery, your belly will feel sore for some time. Take it easy and avoid heavy household work or lifting anything heavier than your baby for eight weeks.

In six to eight weeks, you'll be able to start exercising moderately—but wait until your caregiver gives you the go-ahead. It may be several months or longer before you're back to your former fit self.

You'll be able to resume sexual intercourse in about six weeks—if you're feeling comfortable enough and with your caregiver's okay. Talk to your practitioner about what kind of contraception will work best for you now. You may be able to resume using the birth control method you used in the past, or you may have to make some changes. For example, if you used a diaphragm before, you'll have to be fitted again because you may need a different size after being pregnant and giving birth.

What kind of emotional experience should I expect?

Moms have a wide range of emotions after a C-section, so it's hard to predict how you'll feel. You might feel disappointed if you had your heart set on a vaginal birth. If you had complications or were worried about your baby's well-being, you might not care about how you gave birth.

Some women who end up in surgery after a long, drawn-out labor feel a sense of relief, while others are upset that they ended up with a C-section after doing all that work. Many have mixed emotions.

Some moms say they feel cheated out of a vaginal delivery, especially if they took childbirth classes and fantasized about the "ideal birth." Others say they feel like they're somehow less of a woman because they needed a C-section.

These feelings are common and may be difficult to resolve. If you feel this way, it may take some time to reconcile the reality of your birth experience with what you'd imagined during your pregnancy.

It might help to know that many women find their baby's birth, whether vaginal or C-section, very different from what they expected. If you have nagging doubts about whether the surgery was really necessary, talk to your practitioner about it. Remember, too, that you're likely to have the range of emotions common to most mothers during the postpartum period, regardless of how they gave birth. Postpartum blues are common, whether you had a C-section or a vaginal birth, generally beginning a few days after delivery and lasting for a few days.

If the feelings don't go away on their own in the first few weeks or you find that you're feeling worse rather than better, be sure to call your caregiver with your symptoms. You may be suffering from ***postpartum depression***, a more serious problem that requires treatment, and they can give you a referral for help. If you think you might hurt yourself or your baby, seek professional help immediately.

Finally, a long C-section recovery can be frustrating. Remember that just healing from surgery takes a significant amount of time and energy. Add to that all the postpartum changes your body is going through—along with your new round-the-clock parenting responsibilities—and you're bound to be in less-than-top condition for a while.

Try to cut yourself some slack and be patient. In time, you'll be feeling better and enjoying life with your new baby.

What is a Gentle C-section?

A gentle C-section has been growing in popularity lately due to its family-centered approach. Cesareans are the most common surgery performed on women in this country and a gentle C-section, while still surgery, aims to still give women the birth experience they want through mindsets. From the mindset of the attending OB/GYN, the nurses to the anesthesiologist is to provide as similar an experience to traditional labor and delivery.

What is a VBAC?

If you have had a C-section before, you may be able to deliver your next baby vaginally. This is called vaginal birth after C-section, or VBAC. Most women, whether they deliver vaginally or by C-section, don't have serious problems from childbirth.

If you and your doctor agree to try a VBAC, you will have what is called a "trial of labor." Go in to deliver with this goal in mind. But as in any labor, it is hard to know if a VBAC will work. You still may need a C-section. As many as 4 out of 10 women who have a trial of labor need to have a C-section.

What Are My Chances of Having an Emergency C-section?

Researchers at Amino recently used data analysis to break down a woman's chances to have a C-section and it came down to some surprising factors like their state, day of the week and age of the mom-to-be. They've created several helpful tools that you can use here:

- o The interactive map that will show c section rates by ZIP code in the US.
- o The state-by-state analysis of C-section delivery rates.
- o The C-section predictor tool that looks at many variables like your age, place of residence, previous C-sections and other risk factors like a large baby, gestational diabetes or excessive bleeding.

On average, one in three women have a C-section in America and the majority of those are not planned. This can leave moms in a state of shock about her recovery.

WHAT TO WEAR AFTER YOUR C-SECTION

Congratulations! After nine long months, your sweet little bundle of joy is here and it's time to transition from maternity clothes to postpartum clothes! Now that you're on the road to recovery after birth, you're likely realizing there are some products that you should have added to your baby registry but in #RealLife fashion, "you don't know, what you don't know." The first items on most new mom's lists of items to wear postpartum are postpartum panties and other compression garments.

Should you go for compression garments and postpartum girdles, or are yoga pants and other maternity clothing acceptable? How can you fit into your pre-pregnancy clothes faster? Well, there's great news on all accounts! Many of your maternity clothes can double as things to wear after a C-section and can work well with postpartum and other compression garments! We know you've got your hands full with your new baby, so we made it easy on you by curating our favorite c section and postpartum recovery clothes! Please let us know what you think in the comments below.

Things to Consider About Postpartum Clothes For C-section Moms

Your C-section may not have been expected, so some C-section moms find themselves not fully prepared with the right clothing options for their recovery. If you've recently given birth and are transitioning from maternity clothes to postpartum clothes, you'll want to consider a few things first.

1. Does it have a fluted waistband?
2. Does it offer compression or support?
3. Can I breastfeed easily in this?
4. Does it have buttons or extra latches or devices I'll have to fiddle with?
5. How easy is it to throw on if I'm breastfeeding and need to open the door for a delivery or visitor? (Trust us on this one, your new mommy brain plays tricks on you and you may forget your boob is out and end up flashing the UPS delivery driver or your FIL without even realizing it)
6. Is it machine washable?

It can take 6-10 weeks for your uterus to shrink back to its original size after birth, and while it's shrinking, expect your belly to also take time. These are the general guidelines when considering the best clothes to wear after delivery, especially if you've had a c section. The C-section scar is typically about a four to six-inch incision made horizontally just below the pubic hairline. Taking into consideration where the placement of the C-section scar is, the best clothes to wear after a c section are going to be those that either hold compression over the incision or those that avoid it all together.

ITEMS TO HELP WITH YOUR RECOVERY

Giving birth has often been likened to running a marathon. It's a long, difficult process and your body will need the proper items and time for recovery. As you heal from birth, whether it was vaginal or a belly birth, know that you are amazing! You've grown and birthed a human! As your body begins to heal, be sure to give yourself grace and look for postpartum products that will help with your recovery. Between compression and comfort, is where you'll find the ideal mix for your postpartum recovery!

C-Panty After C-section Recovery & Slimming Panty

- o Postpartum underwear specially designed for C-section recovery. C-Panty was invented by a healthcare professional, Catherine Brooks, after she underwent an emergency C-section and could not find anything on the market for C-section moms. Along with medical-graded compression, C-Panty has a patented, silicone panel built into the panty and covering the incision. The silicone panel helps reduce incisional itching, burning and speeds healing.



Postpartum Yoga Pants

- o There's a reason people have declared that the 'mom uniform' consists of yoga pants and dry shampoo. Between breastfeeding, baby snuggles and trying to heal after giving birth, moms want the easiest, most comfortable clothes and yoga pants are a great way to get mobility and comfort as you go about your day.

Shrinkx Hips

- o This patented, postpartum hip wrap utilizes the hormone relaxin to help bring the hips back together after birth with the help of compression. Relaxin is a hormone that is released during pregnancy and prepares the pelvis for delivery by loosening the joints and ligaments. The levels of relaxin are highest in a woman's body for up to 8 weeks after delivery. It doesn't matter whether you've had a vaginal birth or C-section, your hips were still impacted by relaxin. It's during these 8 weeks postpartum that women who apply gentle compression to their hips with Shrinkx Hips belt will see a narrowing of their hips and often go back to their pre-pregnancy hip size, or smaller.





Postpartum Belly Bands

- o Believe us when we say, you're going to want to wrap your belly after giving birth. The use of a belly wrap after giving birth has been around for ages and for good reason. During those 9 months of pregnancy, your body's organs move to make room for the growing baby and have all become displaced. All pregnant women know the feeling of needing to pee every 5 seconds during pregnancy because our baby has literally been sitting on our bladder! It will take time for everything to "bounce back" (whatever that means) and a great way to help the healing process is to use a postpartum belly wrap.
- o Compressing the abdomen after birth helps reduce swelling, inflammation and bloating. Belly wraps with built-in bone support can help support your lower back while breastfeeding. Belly wraps also support weakened abdominal muscles and help your uterus return to its original position.



Compression Tanks and Nursing Bras

- o If you're breastfeeding, you've probably realized the dire need to have your boobs available at a moment's notice! This can become complicated quickly if you are wearing a nursing bra, but it's under a non-nursing shirt. It's also the reason why many moms opt for nursing tanks. Nursing tanks double as a nursing bra and tank top that can be worn under clothing for easy access for baby. It's especially nice in those first few weeks after birth, to have compression on your mid-section, which is why we recommend UpSpring's Charcoal Fusion Slimming Nursing Tank. It's made of a bamboo charcoal fiber which offers unique therapeutic properties that helps increase circulation and metabolism. This nursing tank also offers moderate compression and drop-down cups for convenient breastfeeding.

OTHER RECOVERY TIPS & TRICKS

- o Check out UpSpring's Postpartum Exercise Guide for more targeted exercises to help in your postpartum recovery and to heal your core.

Compression is Key!



Get help healing your core after birth!

Download our **Free Postpartum Exercise PDF** featuring five targeted exercises that will help you get your pre-pregnancy body back faster, speed recovery & avoid common postpartum recovery mistakes.

UpspringBaby.com/PostpartumPDF

- o Join a mom group: It's so important to find a group of women who are going through the same things you're going through! We are strong. We are powerful. But we are even more of those things when we support each other. Try to find a mom group with other women whose kiddos are close in age. This is not only going to be helpful when you're trying to find out ways to soothe your kid's colic, but also how you're balancing life and what your relationships are like with your partners after baby. Motherhood is a journey and it is so much better with a tribe!

THANKS FOR DOWNLOADING!

Learn more about UpSpring's complete line of all natural products for moms & babies.



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