



Your baby is delivered by cutting through your

abdomen and then into your womb (uterus). The cut is usually made across your abdomen, just below your bikini line. The scar is usually hidden in your pubic hair.

In the UK, most caesarean sections are performed under epidural or spinal anaesthesia, which minimises the risk and means that you're awake for the delivery of your baby. A general anaesthetic (which puts you to sleep) is sometimes used, particularly if the baby needs to be delivered quickly.

If you have an epidural or spinal anaesthesia, you won't feel pain, just some tugging and pulling as your baby is delivered. A screen will be put up so that you can't see what's being

done. The doctors will talk to you and let you know what's happening.

It takes about five to 10 minutes to deliver the baby, and the whole operation takes about 40-50 minutes. One advantage of an epidural or spinal anaesthetic is that you're awake at the moment of delivery and can see and hold your baby immediately. Your birth partner can be with you.

After a caesarean section, you'll feel uncomfortable and will be offered painkillers. You will usually be fitted with a catheter (a small tube that fits into your bladder) for up to 24 hours. You may be prescribed daily injections to prevent blood clots (thrombosis).

You'll be encouraged to become mobile as soon as possible, and your midwife or hospital physiotherapist will give you advice about postnatal exercises that will help you in your recovery. As soon as you can move without pain you can drive - as long as you can perform an emergency stop. This may be six weeks or sooner.

Information syndicated from NHS Choices

- National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE): Guidelines on caesarean section