

# Family-Centered C-Section: Options You Can Ask About

A C-section is surgery, but it's also the birth of your baby. **When you and your baby are stable**, there may be ways to make the operating room feel more connected, personal and centered around your family.



**?** Also called a gentle or natural C-section. **It's still surgery, with room for connection and choice.**

## FIVE QUESTIONS TO ASK

When there's time to talk through a recommendation, use BRAIN to understand your options and make an informed decision.

**B**

### Benefits

What are the benefits for me and my baby?

**R**

### Risks

What are the risks or possible downsides?

**A**

### Alternatives

What other options do we have?

**I**

### Intuition + Information

Is there anything else I need to know? How do I feel about my options?

**N**

### Nothing / Not Yet

What happens if we wait or do nothing right now? Is it safe to wait?

## GOOD TO KNOW

### When to use BRAIN

Use it when you're deciding on a planned C-section, or when a C-section is recommended during labor and there's time to talk. It's okay to ask for a few minutes to think it over.

### In an emergency

Even when things move quickly, your care team should explain what they recommend and why, and ask for your consent unless you're unable to give it. The conversation may be quick, but you can still ask questions.

### Ask for a debrief

When you're ready, you can ask your care team to walk you through what happened and why. Many people find this helps them make sense of an unexpected birth.

## A C-section can still be your birth

You may not be able to control every part of a cesarean, but you can ask what's possible. You still deserve information, choices, connection and respectful care.

## Options for a Family-Centered C-Section

Check what matters to you, then ask your care team about each one. **Options depend on your hospital and what's safe in the moment.**

### BEFORE BIRTH

- ☐ Having your chosen support person with you
- ☐ Your support person taking photos or video
- ☐ Playing your own music
- ☐ Having the team explain what's happening, or keeping the room calm and quiet
- ☐ Positioning your arms and equipment so you can hold your baby

### AT BIRTH

- ☐ A clear or lowered drape to see your baby born
- ☐ Seeing or touching your baby right away
- ☐ Delayed cord clamping
- ☐ Skin-to-skin in the operating room
- ☐ Your support person doing skin-to-skin if you can't
- ☐ Helping lift your baby out (maternal-assisted C-section)

### AFTER BIRTH

- ☐ Feeding in the operating room or recovery area
- ☐ Routine newborn care while your baby stays with you
- ☐ Keeping your baby with you in recovery
- ☐ Delaying your baby's first bath
- ☐ Your support person going with your baby if they need to leave the room

### My top priorities

If only a few things are possible, these matter most to me:

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions for my care team

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**Sources:** ACOG (Approaches to Limit Intervention During Labor and Birth; Delayed Umbilical Cord Clamping After Birth; Cesarean Birth FAQ).

This guide is for education only and is not a substitute for medical advice. Every birth is different. Talk with your provider about what's safe and available for you and your baby.

**Read the full article:** [birthx.org/blog/family-centered-c-section](https://birthx.org/blog/family-centered-c-section)