

WELLINGTON
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EMERGENCY CAESAREAN BIRTH

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EMERGENCY CAESAREAN BIRTH

REASONS FOR AN EMERGENCY CAESAREAN BIRTH

Many women plan a vaginal birth for their baby and end up having an emergency caesarean birth, for a variety of reasons. Your doctor would have explained to you the specific reason for your needing a caesarean birth at the time, but with all that was happening around you, the details may now seem a little unclear and you may have some further questions. This pamphlet is intended to provide some information about emergency caesarean births and your doctor will discuss this further with you before you are discharged from hospital.

The two most common reasons for an emergency caesarean birth are:

- Your baby's condition indicates that they need to be born as soon as possible.
- Your progress in labour has stopped, even after other treatments to see if labour will continue, may have been attempted. There are two reasons why the progress of labour can stop and they are:
 - The position of the part of the baby trying to come out first is preventing progress because of a poor fit—this situation is specific to this labour and this baby.
 - Despite the baby being in a good position and contractions being strong your labour does not progress—this situation may recur in future pregnancies.

Other reasons for an emergency caesarean birth are less common and may include complications of mother's health or concerns about baby's growth which make it safer to avoid labour and vaginal birth, or you went into labour before your date for a planned elective caesarean birth.

IF IT IS AN EMERGENCY WHY DOESN'T THE CAESAREAN ALWAYS HAPPEN STRAIGHT AWAY?

When an emergency caesarean birth is required there are guidelines about how quickly this may need to be performed which are based on the reason for the caesarean. Sometimes staff have to prioritise emergency caesarean births if several women need one at the same time. Usually, the woman and her baby most at risk will go first. So even though you were told it was an emergency, you may have waited until all the necessary staff could safely look after you and your baby.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH MY NEXT BIRTH?

Most women who have had one emergency caesarean birth can have a vaginal birth in their next pregnancy. In general, it is safer to deliver vaginally than by caesarean and your Obstetrician will advise if this is appropriate for you, in your next pregnancy. There are some factors which can arise in future pregnancies which mean this may have to be reconsidered. In your next pregnancy, an Obstetrician will discuss your specific circumstances considering both the reason for your



emergency caesarean birth, as well as what is happening in your subsequent pregnancy, before you make a final decision as to what you would plan to do.

Women who have had more than one caesarean birth, or those women who had a classical (different type of incision in the uterus) caesarean birth with this baby, would be encouraged to consider an elective caesarean birth next time. The operation is performed at 39 weeks without waiting for labour to begin because in these circumstances, the risks of labour and vaginal birth are believed to be greater than those of an elective repeat caesarean birth.

