

5 Tips to Increase Comfort During Caesarean Birth Recovery



Created by Jessi Noskiewicz, RMT for
"Enhance Your Pregnancy, Naturally"

Natural Solutions to Support and Enhance your Pregnancy
from Preconception to Postpartum

A virtual summit hosted by:
Dr. Jordanna Clarfield-Henry



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#1 Side Lying Maneuver to Transition from Supine to Sitting

To avoid increasing intra-abdominal pressure post-caesarean birth you want to avoid relying on your abdominal muscles to bring yourself into a seated position. Rather than pulling yourself straight up from a supine (lying on your back) position, do the following:

- 1) Roll to your side
- 2) Place your hand flat on the bed (or floor) and use your arm strength to push your upper body up gently instead

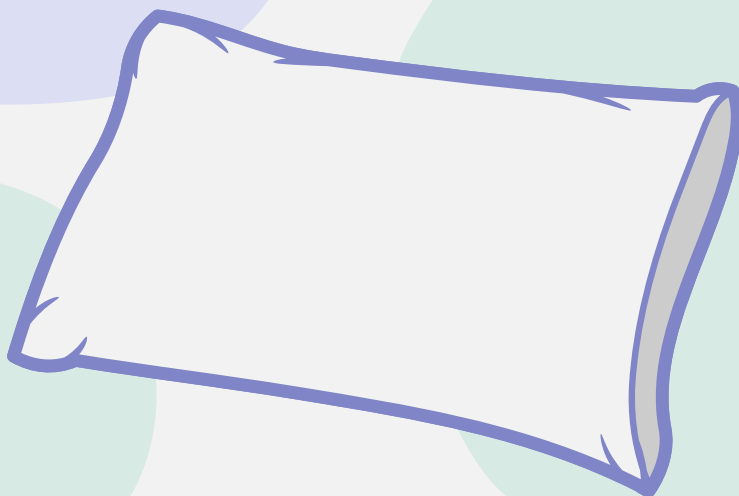


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#2 Pillow Assisted Cough Maneuver

This technique is also about avoiding increased intra-abdominal pressure. Coughing, sneezing, and even laughing engages your abdominal muscles and can create pain and discomfort on your incision site in the early stages of healing.

Place a pillow over top of your lower abdomen and gently press on your belly while you cough/sneeze/laugh. This counter pressure will minimize the internal pressure on your incision to avoid unnecessary pain. If you find yourself without a pillow handy you can gently press your palms (flat) overtop of the incision site.



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#3 Tools for Comfort in a Semi-Reclined Position

Depending on the circumstances that led you to a caesarean birth, and your body's experience of pain following the surgery, you may find yourself on modified bed rest for a number of days or weeks. **Note:** it is also important to get up and move around (cautiously) as soon as possible, please follow the advise of your primary care provider.

Here are some tools to consider if you find yourself stuck in bed during recovery / while caring for your newborn:

- 1) A large triangle wedge pillow will keep you supported in a semi-reclined position without having to keep adjusting pillows that move around and get compressed over time.
- 2) A well-stuffed pillow OR cylindrical bolster under your knees will keep them bent at a comfortable position and alleviate pressure on the lower back
- 3) An orthopedic donut pillow to support the coccyx (tailbone) will reduce pressure on this sensitive area that may be painful if sitting semi-reclined for long periods of time.

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#4 Keep your incision dry

After bathing, avoid using a towel to dry the incision site. Instead, use a hair dryer on a low, "cool" setting to dry the area.

You can also use this technique if you find your incision site is getting sweaty or there is moisture developing throughout the day due to overhanging tissue ("apron belly").



Wear high waisted underwear to avoid rubbing on the incision site but also find time to air out the incision. This is especially important if you have an "apron belly"... Lie on your back and gently lift your belly to uncover your incision. Take a few minutes to practice some slow belly breathing.



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#5 Elevate Swollen Feet

It's common to experience edema (excess fluid that creates swelling) in the feet during pregnancy and after giving birth; this can be exacerbated by IV fluids that may be given during labour or caesarean surgery.

Walking and moving around is an important part of recovery, and will also help to rid your body of excess fluids, but gravity may also contribute to swelling and an uncomfortable pressure in the legs / feet. Giving your feet an (elevated) rest is the key. You want to get your feet above the level of your heart to encourage the body to drain excess fluid so find a good bolster to support your lower leg and feet OR lie on the floor and put your feet up on a chair or couch. Gentle movement of the knees and ankles will also encourage drainage.



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