



## Using complementary therapies if you are having a Caesarean section

Most mothers have a normal labour and a vaginal birth, but sometimes problems arise and the baby has to be delivered quickly, either because he's in distress or has difficulty negotiating the birth canal, or because there are complications before or during labour. If you have specific medical or pregnancy problems you may be advised to have a planned Caesarean, for example, placental bleeding, or if your baby is in a position which makes it impossible for him to be born naturally. The current UK Caesarean section rate is almost 25% - so there is a 1:4 chance you may need one - but it's a major operation which shouldn't be done without a definite medical reason, so don't ask for one just because it seems more convenient than waiting for labour to start!

### Complementary therapies if you are having a Caesarean section

- Bach flower remedies - try Rescue Remedy, 4 drops neat on your tongue, taken just before you go into the operating theatre to prevent anxiety and panic; your partner can use it too! It is safe to take, even though you are not allowed to have anything else to eat or drink, and it will not interfere with drugs which the doctor may give you. After the Caesarean you may need Bach flower walnut to help you adapt to change, olive for tiredness or oak if you are completely exhausted. If you feel disappointed and resentful about having had a Caesarean, try gentian and willow. If the Caesarean was an emergency, take Star of Bethlehem to combat the sense of shock.
- Relaxation exercises - deep breathing exercises to keep you calm, and after the birth to prevent chest infections. Gentle ankle-circling promotes good circulation in your legs. Don't forget your



pelvic floor exercises – even if you have a Caesarean your muscles have been relaxed by the pregnancy hormones.

- Massage in pregnancy and early postnatal period, aids wellbeing and recovery.
- Aromatherapy - orange, ylang ylang, frankincense and lavender for relaxation beforehand, lavender and tea tree in the bath, for relaxation, pain relief and to prevent infection afterwards
- Acupressure wristbands relieve sickness - position the button on the bands directly over the acupuncture point – 3 fingers breadth up from the wrist crease on your inner arm
- Reflexology to encourage uterine contractions should not be done before your baby is born if you are due to have a planned Caesarean but careful relaxing reflexology treatment after the birth can ease pain, aid relaxation and encourage bowel movements
- Herbal medicines – [stop all herbal medicines at least two weeks before a planned Caesarean to avoid the risk of interacting with other drugs. Some herbal remedies affect blood clotting so it is especially important to stop taking them before any surgical operation.](#)
- Avoid raspberry leaf tea during pregnancy if you are due to have a planned Caesarean.
- Calendula or chamomile cream or tincture can be gently applied to the area around the wound to aid healing.
- St John's wort (hypericum perforatum) aids wound healing herbal remedy, but not use if you are breastfeeding

### **Homeopathic remedies which may help if you need a Caesarean section**

Try ARNICA if you

- have pain and swelling
- are shocked, sore, bruised
- do not want to be touched, want to be left alone
- are experiencing bad dreams

NB Arnica cream should not be applied over broken skin

Try **HYPERICUM** if you

- experience extreme pain when wound is touched
- feel better if you lie quietly
- have nervous depression after the Caesarean

Try **BELLIS PERENNIS** if you

- are bruised and sore with bumps over the wound
- have deep aching pelvic pain
- have had an emergency Caesarean with a lot of trauma

Try **STAPHYSAGRIA** if you

- have sharp, needle-like pain
- feel worse when sitting or pressure is applied to wound
- have a lot of wind after the Caesarean

Always inform your midwife if you are using any natural remedies or receiving treatment from a complementary therapist

For more individualised advice on preparing for, or recovering from, Caesarean section, call Expectancy on **0906 400 6227** (calls charged at £1.50 per minute, from a BT landline; calls from mobiles and other networks may vary)