

# HUGS Family-Centred Caesarean Birth

## Patient Information

[www.interiorhealth.ca](http://www.interiorhealth.ca)

### What is a family-centred caesarean birth?

The birth of your baby is a very special life event, and having a baby by caesarean is no different. It is a time to honour and celebrate your family.

A caesarean birth is an operation and may be:

- An unplanned event, when there is a concern about you or your baby's health
- A planned and/or repeat event

Our **HUGS** program was developed to help you have the best birth experience possible.

### HUGS Caesarean Birth

Our goal is to keep families together, with mothers and babies skin-to-skin following caesarean birth.

In the past, mothers were often separated from their baby and family support person soon after the birth.

We now know that this is not ideal, and if there are no health concerns for the mother or baby, it is best to keep everyone together.

### A HUGS birth is:

Honouring your birth experience

Uninterrupted skin-to-skin time

Gentle support to breastfeed

Safety for you and your baby



Photo credit: Nicole Romeiko

### Honouring your birth experience

Discuss your wishes ahead of time with your doctor or midwife. Some ideas are:

- keep a **calm** and quiet operating room, **or** one that is **fun** and friendly
- play your choice of **music**
- watch your baby's birth and take **photos**
- see if your baby is a girl or boy yourselves
- **stay together** in the operating and recovery rooms.

### Uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact

We know that moms and babies do best when they are skin-to-skin as soon after the birth as possible. It is best if you can stay skin-to-skin for:

- at least until the first breastfeed
- the first hour
- as long as you wish

Skin-to-skin time can:

- help breastfeeding get a good start
- improve your baby's heart rate, temperature, breathing, and blood sugar
- decrease crying
- help you share your good skin bacteria with your baby
- be a special time for bonding

Please let us know if you don't want to do skin-to-skin, or if you want a break from it. Your family support person can snuggle baby instead.



Interior Health

Form Number Date

**BC HealthLink**

Dial 8 -1-1

Hearing Impaired Dial 7-1-1

Talk to a Nurse 24 hours/day, 7 days/week

Pharmacist available between 5 p.m. - 9 a.m. daily

Dietitian between 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. - Monday to Friday

[www.healthlinkbc.ca](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca)

# HUGS Family-Centred Caesarean Birth

## Patient Information

[www.interiorhealth.ca](http://www.interiorhealth.ca)

### Gentle support to breastfeed

Often in the first hour your baby will try to look for your nipple. Babies can sometimes find the nipple all on their own, but you can help by gently guiding your baby.

Babies use smell to help them latch so it is best not to wash your baby or your breasts for the first 24 hours.

Don't worry if your baby doesn't breastfeed in the first couple hours. It may take your baby a little time to recover from the birth. Spend as much time skin-to-skin as you can so your baby has lots of chances to latch when ready.

If you have trouble breastfeeding, ask your nurse to help you learn how to hand express. This can help build a good milk supply if done in the first few hours and at every feeding attempt in the early days.

If you don't plan to breastfeed, spending time skin-to-skin is just as important for your baby's health and bonding.

### Safety for you and your baby

Your doctors, midwife and nurses will keep a close eye on you and your baby in the operating and recovery room.

Sometimes we may need to assess you or your baby more carefully so staying together as a family may not be an option.

Other times, we may not be able to keep you together for different reasons (e.g. there may not be a nurse who can stay with you in the recovery room or there are other very sick patients).

This may mean:

- We are not able to offer skin-to-skin care or keep you and your baby together
- Your baby may need to be taken to the nursery

If this happens, your family support person will usually be invited to go to the nursery to stay with your baby while you go to the recovery room. We will make every effort to reunite you as a family as soon as possible.

### For more information:

Talk about your caesarean birth wishes with your doctor, midwife, or nurse.

Go to [www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca](http://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca) (and search caesarean birth; skin-to-skin; breastfeeding).



Interior Health

Form Number Date

**BC HealthLink**

Dial 8-1-1

Hearing Impaired Dial 7-1-1

Talk to a Nurse 24 hours/day, 7 days/week

Pharmacist available between 5 p.m. - 9 a.m. daily

Dietitian between 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. - Monday to Friday

[www.healthlinkbc.ca](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca)