

# S U<sup>TM</sup>: THE ABCs OF C-SECTIONS

A Cesarean birth — or C-section — is sometimes needed because of

## Some reasons you might need a C-section:

- A complication occurs before labor
- Severe bleeding
- The baby is in distress
- Failure to progress in labor
- The baby is not in the right position for delivery
- The baby is too big to fit through the pelvis
- You have had multiple pregnancies, or already had a C-section



## Risks associated with C-sections:

- Infection
- Bladder or bowel injuries
- Severe bleeding or blood clots in legs, lungs or organs
- Blood transfusion
- Hysterectomy

## What to know and when:

- Ask your doctor why you would need a C-section
- Understand the difference between abnormal versus normal labor
- Ask what the risks and benefits are compared with labor
- Understand what antibiotics would be given to prevent infection and how blood clots will be prevented
- Understand what type of anesthesia will be used and the risks and benefits of using it

### Before the procedure

- Ask why you need a C-section, and what to expect
- Make sure your health care team is aware of any underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure or heart problems
- Understand the risks involved with surgery
- Understand what antibiotics will be given to prevent infection and how blood clots will be prevented
- Understand what type of anesthesia will be used and the risks and benefits of using it
- Understand when blood transfusion would be necessary

### Checking out, heading home

- Learn about how to care for your wound after you leave the hospital
- Learn the signs of infection (warmth, redness, oozing) and who to contact if there is a problem
- Know when your next appointment is and how to get in touch with your doctor
- Determine what to do for birth control after the baby is born

## What should my patient advocate do?

- Patient advocates should pay close attention to all the instructions before or after a C-section, including:
- Understanding how to care for the wound once you leave the hospital
  - How to prevent infection
  - Information about medications