

# Planning a gentle caesarean in NHS Lothian

## Factsheet 7

Congratulations! Having a baby is such an exciting time but it can also be confusing to know what your options are about where to give birth, who to take and where to find support and prepare. We've created this factsheet with you in mind. If you still have any further questions, do email us at: [EBBSinfo@gmail.com](mailto:EBBSinfo@gmail.com)



## What is a Gentle Caesarean Birth?

Sometimes referred to as a family-centred caesarean – this term is used to describe births which are still through the caesarean incision but normally have a number of specific elements such as:

- Environment controlled (ie lights dimmed as baby is born, limited noises etc)
- Slow delivery of the baby (baby walked out)
- Screens lowered at the time of delivery so you can see your baby being born
- Delayed cord clamping
- Immediate skin to skin (before any checks are done)

## What are the issues?

The issues are that:

- current procedures in the delivery rooms are not supportive of this and
- many women don't understand it's an option or how to advocate for themselves to achieve it.

There are numerous reasons why women are told it's not an option for them. Unfortunately there is evidence that many women are given information biased against gentle caesareans when they enquire about it being an option for their family.

The barriers are that women are told include: that babies need to be weighed first, that observations need to be done before skin to skin, or that because of the wires it's not possible.

None of these are valid reasons for not supporting gentle caesareans. For those women who have been adamant that this is what they have wanted, NHS Lothian have accommodated their wishes. This shows that it might be more possible than many women are led to believe.

### Is there a time when it wouldn't be possible?

Yes – if there is prematurity, an underlying health issue, there are medical concerns with mum or if baby has had any signs of fetal distress during labour (if applicable).

If mum is unwell, then Dad/Partner should always be

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## How do you achieve it?

1. Find out more about Gentle/Natural Caesareans
2. Develop a birth plan, going through all the various options
3. Speak to your community midwife about your birth plan and ask for their input and support.
4. Discuss this with your birth partner so they know your wishes and know how to support you.
5. On the day, speak with the midwife who is responsible for your care. If she is unsupportive of your choices, ask for a different midwife (this is something that is within your rights to do and you or your birth partner can do this by going to speak to the reception desk on the labour ward).
6. As a last course of action, if your wishes are not being listened to, you can remove your consent to the caesarean until you feel that your wishes are being heard (obviously in an emergency you may not want to do this – but REAL emergencies are rare).

## Further Information

Should you wish to have further support, contact Tricia Murray for a one to one session to help you prepare or enrol in the Birth and Baby Academy Caesarean Bundle Online Course.

Other places you can look to find more information include:

[The NICE guidelines on caesareans](#)

You can also watch a useful film about gentle caesareans [here](#) on YouTube.

And the [Positive Birth Movement Group](#) in Edinburgh is a good place to learn more about gentle caesareans.

If you have any further questions do get in touch or visit our website –

<http://www.edinburghbirthandbaby.com>

