

What is the cell saver?

The cell saver is a way of collecting your own blood lost during an operation and giving it back to you. It is also called an autologous blood transfusion (using your own blood). This might happen when you have a baby by caesarean section.

During a caesarean section, it is normal to lose up to 1000mls of blood. If you lose too much blood it can make recovering from surgery more difficult, especially with a new baby. It can help to have your blood replaced during surgery. The blood can come from another person, a blood donor, or from your own blood collected by cell saver.

How is cell saver done?



During your caesarean section the obstetrician will use a cell saver machine to collect any blood you may lose during the surgery. This machine collects only red blood cells.

Red blood cells carry oxygen around the body. The red cells are washed and filtered, and can be given back to you through an IV. An IV is a small tube that is

routinely placed in a vein before a caesarean section. Your blood will only ever be given to you and cannot be used for anyone else.

Who can benefit from cell saver?

1. Women who deliver their babies by caesarean section and have risk factors for extra bleeding. Ask your maternity care provider if you have any of these risk factors.
2. Cell saver may be an acceptable option for women who cannot receive donated blood for reasons of faith, such as Jehovah's Witnesses.
3. Women who have low blood levels (severe anemia) prior to a caesarean section.

What are the advantages of cell saver?

If you receive your own blood you are less likely to require a blood transfusion from a blood donor. This reduces the very small risks associated with donor blood (please ask your maternity care provider for more information about this). Using your own blood also helps save donated blood for severe medical emergencies.

What are the concerns with using the cell saver?

The cell saver has very few risks. At one time there was concern about amniotic fluid (water around your baby) being present in the collected blood, and causing a severe reaction. This has never happened during the many years that cell saver has been used.

If your blood type is rhesus negative your body can produce harmful antibodies to fetal cells during delivery. To prevent these harmful antibodies from forming, you will be offered an injection within 72 hours of delivering your baby. When cell saver is used there can be additional fetal cells in the collected blood. A higher dose of the injection may then be required if the cell saver is used.

Where can I get more information?

If you have any further questions please ask your health care provider or obstetrician prior to your caesarean section.