



Important information regarding Caesarean section waiting times at Tygerberg Hospital

Dear valued patient,

- A Caesarean section is an operation to deliver a baby.
- At Tygerberg labour ward, we have limited theatre space available, as follows:
 - One emergency theatre that operates 24 hours per day, every day of the week. Women who need emergency (category 1 or 2- see below) operations are operated here.
 - It is important that you know that cases on this list are booked according to priority. This means that cases where the mother or the baby’s life is at severe risk will be done first.
 - There is one additional elective (planned) theatre available on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays(08h00-16h00) and Wednesdays (08h00-13h00).
 - A planned (elective) procedure is where the operation is already planned at the clinic, and you get a date to come in the day before your operation (category 3 or 4-see below).

The current reality at Tygerberg Hospital, as with many other public-sector hospitals, is that the available theatre time is not enough for the number of Caesarean sections we need to perform. This is mainly due to the high number of cases that we see, as well as budget constraints. This means that even if you are given a date and your name is scheduled on a theatre list and you are kept nil per mouth, we cannot guarantee that you will have your operation on that date. You must be aware of this situation. In some circumstances, women wait a week or more from the date they were originally scheduled.

There will be times when there are also not enough beds for women to wait for their Caesarean section; in these cases, you will be asked to return home and will either be given an alternative date or the doctors will take your phone number and call you when you can come for your operation. We acknowledge and that this could become a stressful and unpleasant situation for you and your family, and we are working hard to resolve this problem.

We triage (see which cases are most urgent) regularly, even on an hourly basis, to try to provide our resources to those who need them most urgently, first, and then the rest. We follow the guidelines below; this is used in many countries in the world.

Urgency of Caesarean Section Classification

Category 1 - Red	Immediate threat to the life of the woman or fetus
Category 2 - Orange	Mother and baby compromised, but is not immediately life-threatening
Category 3 - Yellow	Mother and baby not compromised but needs early birth
Category 4 - Green	Birth timed to suit woman and/or healthcare provider

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please ask the doctor who is involved in your care. Please remember the following: the doctors and nurses working in the clinics or wards all try their best, but they cannot personally improve or control the situation, so please treat them with respect.

Regards,

Dr M Moodley, Chief Operating Officer: Tygerberg Hospital
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