

Sip till Send for women scheduled for elective caesarean delivery

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Background

Patients who are awaiting elective caesarean delivery have traditionally been requested to not drink fluids for two hours to decrease the risk of pulmonary aspiration.[1]

In clinical practice, women often fast longer due to factors such as the delay caused by the labour ward's emergency caseload.

Sip till Send is a permissive fasting protocol that allows the sipping of water until patients are sent to the operating theatre. It has already been established that the gastric emptying of small volumes of clear fluids is no different in full term women compared to non-pregnant controls.[1]

Our Aims

Our aim was to evaluate the effect of our newly introduced and unrestricted Sip till Send protocol on fasting times and the occurrence of adverse effects of prolonged fasting, such as headache, nausea and vomiting.

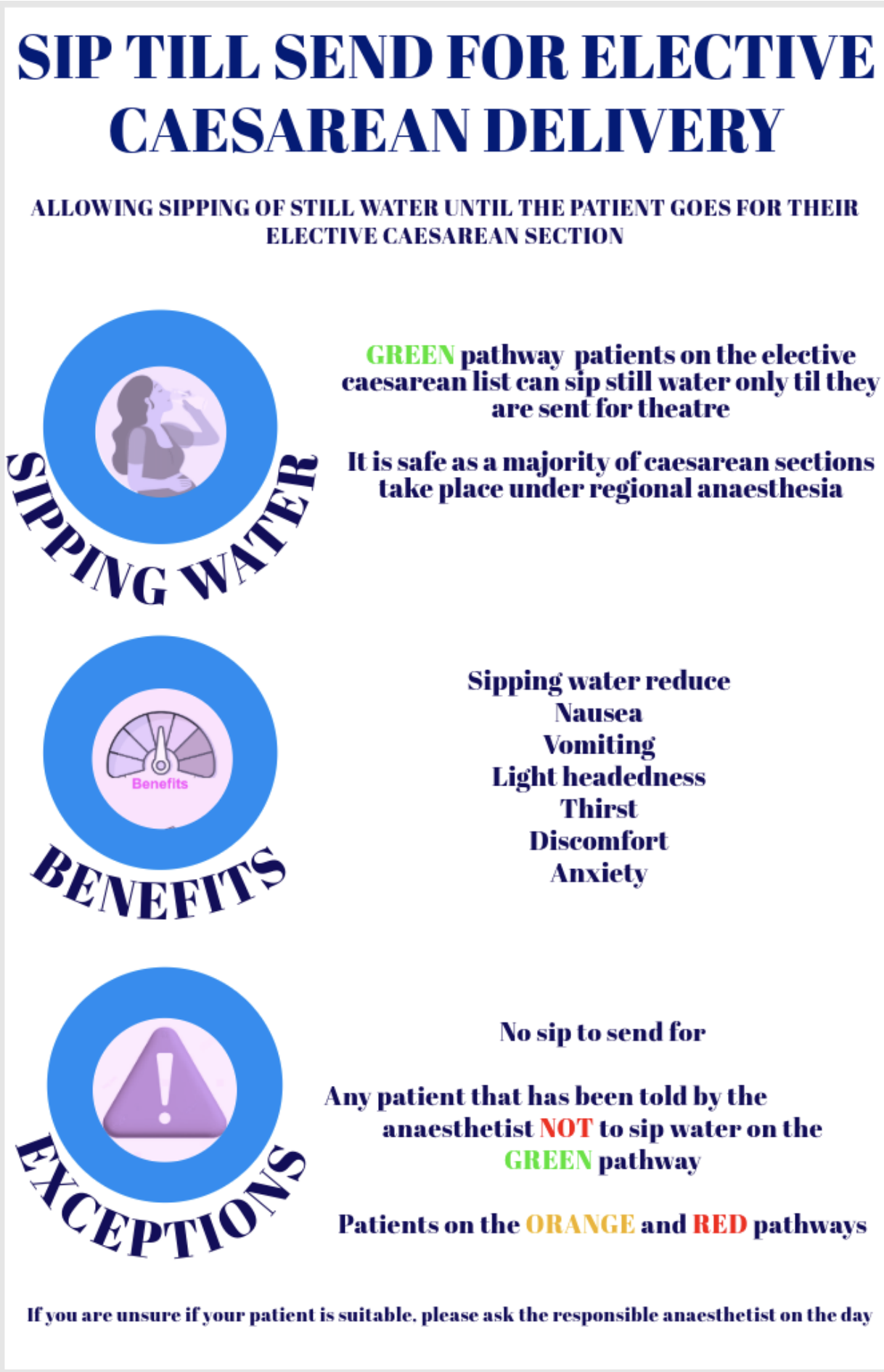


Diagram 1: Sip till send poster placed in the Department as part of this protocol

Method

Approval was obtained from the local audit committee. Before and after the implementation of the Sip till Send protocol, patients were asked if they would like to participate in a short paper questionnaire. Women were requested to fill in the survey prior to transfer to theatre.

Results

Compared to a mean fasting time for fluids of five hours prior to its introduction, patients had a mean fasting time of 90 minutes with Sip till Send (Table 1). The mean severity of thirst further decreased from six to three and a half out of ten. The incidence of nausea was reduced. Despite an overall trend of reduced dizziness and headache, no statistical significance was shown in these outcomes.

	Pre- intervention (n=40)	Post- intervention (n=50)	p value
Fasting time for liquids (h)	5.2 (5.3)	1.5(2.0)	<0.05
Fasting time for solids (h)	11.6 (3.3)	11.1(2.4)	0.4
Severity of thirst (1-10)	6.3 (2.0)	3.5 (1.5)	0.07
Nausea	12 (30%)	4 (8%)	<0.05
Dizziness or light-headed	5 (12.5%)	4 (8%)	0.2
Headache	8 (20%)	6 (12%)	0.3

Table 1. Results from sip till send

Values are expressed as n (%), mean (standard deviation)

Outcomes

Sip till Send has made an important improvement in patient comfort by decreasing fasting fluid times, severity of thirst and nausea. Unlike similar studies, [2] occurrences of other adverse effects of prolonged fasting were not reduced, a likely reflection of the limited number of women who were recruited to be studied, as part of this quality improvement initiative

Plans are to continue education about the Sip till Send policy, with delivery suite team members, and re-audit.

References

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