



EXCLUSIVE

Mums delivering own babies in caesarean surgery at Epworth Freemasons

A Melbourne mum has spoken of the “instant love” she felt as she reached down and pulled her baby straight from her own womb. She is one of the new mums making caesarean births more personal by delivering their own babies.

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Ayesha Everitt with seven-week old Hugo. Picture: David Caird

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Melbourne mums are making [caesarean births](#) more personal by delivering their own babies in the operating theatre.

Fitzroy GP Ayesha Everitt was the first to do so at East Melbourne's Epworth Freemasons hospital and said the experience of reaching down and pulling her baby straight from her womb was "just amazing".

"It exceeded all my expectations. I felt that rush of emotions and instant love from the moment I touched him," she said.

"Knowing I was one of the first people to hold him in the world, and to lift my baby up on to my chest myself, was just so special and overwhelming in the most wonderful of ways."

Born seven weeks ago, in the middle of the COVID crisis, little Hugo knows nothing of his place in Epworth history, but, as the first c-section baby delivered by his own mum at the busy Freemasons hospital, his special delivery was not lost on obstetrician Stephen Cole.



Ayesha said she felt instant love after lifting Hugo from her womb. Picture: Supplied

"There was such a buzz in the room, it was a tremendous feeling," Dr Cole said, adding he was standing by, "ready to catch" if the need arose.

"But it went like clockwork ... the theatre staff were blown away by it all.

“Everyone thought it was incredible, and it reinforced that it’s something we should keep offering,” Dr Cole said.

While maternal-assisted [caesareans](#) had been performed at hospitals in Australia and overseas before, it was rare and a first for the Epworth, he said.

“Frances Perry Private Hospital here in Melbourne already does it and there’s also a hospital in Brisbane ... so there are little pockets of it happening around Australia,” Dr Cole said.

“It’s something that could become much more mainstream, if it catches on and people are enthusiastic about it.”

Dr Everitt, a second-time mum and GP, said while she might seem like the ideal candidate for the procedure, women would not need a medical background to enjoy the experience.



Ayesha with baby Hugo. Picture: Supplied

“My husband isn’t medical and he watched the whole thing. He just viewed a couple of YouTube tutorials beforehand and was absolutely fine,” Dr Everitt said.

“I think it depends on you as a person, not on your job ... you probably need to be OK with seeing a bit of blood, but having said that, you don’t see too much.”

She said she did not feel at all apprehensive before the surgery and found the experience of delivering her own baby thrilling and empowering, particularly compared with her first, conventional caesarean birth two-and-half years ago.

Dr Cole said the drape usually present during a caesarean operation — blocking the mother’s view of the surgery — was removed during a maternal assisted procedure.

Mums were expertly instructed, then very carefully and closely monitored as they delivered their own babies, he stressed.

“It’s about facilitating women to be more actively involved in the caesarean birth of their baby if they are keen and it is safe to do so,” Dr Cole said.



Ayesha with baby Hugo, husband Nathan and other son Charlie. Picture: David Caird

Dr Peter Jurcevic, who pioneered maternal assisted caesareans in Melbourne at the Frances Perry private maternity hospital two years ago — and has

performed more than 50 since — said he was “absolutely passionate” about helping women be more involved in the birth of their babies.

“I cried the first time, it was so emotional,” he said.

“It’s just so beautiful because it gives women control in a medical situation.”

Dr Jurcevic said he was now performing the procedure in some complicated births, and had recently facilitated the world’s first breech and placenta previa maternal assisted caesarean surgeries, here in Melbourne.

He was also hoping to be able to extend the procedure to some emergency caesareans in future.

Dr Jurcevic said it was good to hear another Melbourne obstetrician was now offering maternal assisted caesareans.