

Vaginal Birth After Cesarean Section (VBAC)

This handout explains the option of choosing a vaginal birth after cesarean section. (VBAC). This helps our patients decide if they want to attempt a vaginal birth or to have a repeat C section.

Are vaginal births possible after a C section?

Yes. If you have had one or two C sections in the past, you may be able to have a VBAC in the future. The success rates of women trying VBAC range between 60% and 80%.

Why choose to have a VBAC?

- Shorter recovery time
- No surgery
- Less chance of infection
- Less blood loss
- Less complications with future pregnancies
- Less risk for future deliveries

Who can have a VBAC?

- Those who have had one or two C sections.
- Those whose C section incision on the uterus was “low transverse” rather than vertical. Skin incision may be different than the incision on the uterus. We will need to get the report of your prior C section to confirm this.

Who can't have a VBAC?

During a consult, your provider will help determine what your success rate could be. Some patients may **not** be able to have a VBAC if:

- The baby is not head down
- The placenta is covering the cervix (placenta previa)

- They have had more than two C sections
- They have had prior uterine rupture

What are the risks of trying VBAC?

- Uterine rupture
- Emergency C section
- Risks to your health
- Risks to baby's health
- There is more risk if C section needs to be done after an attempt at labor compared to having a planned repeat C section

How can risks be decreased?

- Use continuous fetal monitoring, to assure baby's health through labor
- Have lab work (to include blood count and blood typing)
- Have an intravenous line (IV) while in labor
- Use certain medicines to soften and ripen the cervix as the due date gets closer
- Give birth in a hospital with a provider who can manage problems if they were to arise
- Avoid prolonged labor, and proceed to repeat C section if problems arise

What can increase my chances of having a successful VBAC?

- Your labor starts on its own
- You labor starts before the due date
- You have had a successful vaginal delivery in the past
- You have good prenatal care that includes a healthy diet and exercise

Are there less risks with a C section birth?

There are risks with all types of deliveries, vaginal and C sections. Most patients and their babies have happy and healthy outcomes.

What if I have questions or concerns?

Discuss these issues, your concerns, and your health history with our Ob/Gyn provider. You and your provider will make a plan that you both agree with.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 1/2022. University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#6687