

# Vaginal Birth After Cesarean Section

Having a baby after a Cesarean section poses special risks for you and your baby. Your doctor has determined that you may be a candidate for Vaginal Birth After Cesarean section (VBAC).

In general, a vaginal delivery is associated with fewer risks to the mother than a C-section. A C-section is major surgery, and has a greater risk of infection and bleeding as well as the complications associated with anesthesia. These risks, though still present with a vaginal birth, occur less frequently.

As with all medical procedures, there are risks associated with VBAC that you need to be aware of. The primary risks are:

- Separation or rupture of the scar on the uterus from your previous C-section can occur up to 3% of the time. If uterine rupture occurs, you will require an emergency C-section (and possibly the complete removal of your uterus), your baby could suffer fetal distress and you could have internal bleeding. In a catastrophic uterine rupture, both mother and baby could die or suffer serious permanent injury.
- Unsuccessful trial of labor and need for a repeat C-section. Factors that your doctor will consider in determining your chance of successful VBAC include the size of your baby at term in relation to the size of your bony pelvis, the presentation of the baby (must be head-first), and other medical problems that may be a factor in how you should most safely deliver.

It is important to stress that up to 75% of women who attempt a Vaginal Birth After Cesarean section are successful. Of the women for whom VBAC was unsuccessful, a repeat C-section was done. We encourage you to ask your doctor any questions you may have about these issues.