

# Vaginal Birth after Cesarean Section (VBAC)

## Can I still have a traditional delivery?

Many women who have previously given birth through Cesarean section (C-section) can still safely give birth to a child through a normal vaginal delivery. Attempts at vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC) have a high success rate and have many benefits.

In cases where a vaginal birth attempt is unsuccessful, a repeat cesarean section is performed.

Occasionally, medical history or circumstance can make VBAC a poor choice for women – a repeat cesarean section would be recommended in this case. Ask your health care professional if VBAC is right for you.

## Background of vaginal Birth after Cesarean (VBAC)

Cesarean section deliveries are becoming more frequent. They account for 15 to 25 percent of all births in North America. They are performed for a variety of reasons:

- a slow or difficult labour (referred to as Dystocia),
- the mother has already had a cesarean section for a previous birth
- a breech birth

Because a Cesarean section leaves a scar on the wall of the uterus, doctors will sometimes recommend a repeat cesarean section for pregnant women instead of a trying a VBAC delivery. However, a vaginal birth is still a safe option for the majority of women who have had a C-section.

## Benefits of a vaginal Delivery

There are several benefits to having a vaginal birth instead of a repeat cesarean:

- reduces blood loss,
- reduces injury and risk of infection
  - eliminates complications associated with surgery
  - require a shorter hospital stay
  - more rapid recovery
  - less painful

## Risks of VBAC

- A C-Section leaves a scar on the uterus. This is a weak area and can tear during labour. This is called a uterine rupture. If this occurs you would require an emergency C-section. You could need a blood transfusion or a hysterectomy and the baby could be harmed.

## What if You Have Had 2 or More C-Sections?

- VBAC is still an option if you have had more than one previous birth by cesarean, though the risk of complication is slightly higher.

## What you need to know

- To reduce risks, spontaneous labour is preferred over induced labour for VBAC.
- Your doctor will review your surgery record and discuss whether a trial of VBAC is right for you.
- Make sure your doctor has your previous surgery records

## Can I have my delivery at home?

A VBAC should occur in a hospital for the safety of the baby and mother

## Is an epidural still an option?

Yes, an epidural is frequently used during a VBAC.

## For More info

More information on VBAC is available in the Clinical Guideline for Vaginal Birth after Previous Cesarean Birth at the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) website: [www.sogc.org](http://www.sogc.org)

