



WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION
for Perinatal Care

Things to Consider when Making the Decision to have a Vaginal Birth After Cesarean (VBAC)

The decision whether to have a repeat Cesarean birth or a VBAC (vaginal birth after cesarean) is an important one that affects you, your baby, and future pregnancies. The following information is presented to help you make an informed choice.

Benefits to Mother

- Avoiding complications of surgery
- Faster recovery
- Higher rates of breastfeeding success
- Less Risk of
 - Bleeding
 - Chronic abdominal pain
 - Need for hysterectomy
 - Need for transfusion
- Lower rates of infection
- More satisfaction with delivery
- No additional scarring of the uterus that can affect future pregnancies (These effects can include the placenta attaching in the wrong place or incorrectly, lower fertility rates, and a slightly increased risk of stillbirth.)
- Shorter hospitalizations

Risks to Mother

- Uterine tearing
 - Generally, with one prior cesarean, the risk of experiencing a uterine tear is less than one person out of 100. Risk factors vary for individuals. Your specific risks and how they may affect you and your baby should be discussed with your health care provider.
- Risks associated with an unsuccessful VBAC
 - Infection
 - Bleeding too much
 - Needing a blood transfusion
 - Tearing of the uterus
 - Hysterectomy
 - Other injury during surgery

Benefits for Your Baby

- Decreased risk of allergies and gastroenteritis after one year of age
- Decreased risk of asthma
- Decreased risk of breathing problems after delivery
- Earlier contact with your baby
- Increased rate of breastfeeding success
- Less need for NICU admission
- No risk of surgical injury

Risks to Your Baby

- While any form of birth has risks, VBAC carries a small risk of a uterine tear which could cause a harmful change in the blood flow to the baby. Due to this risk, your baby will be monitored very carefully during labor if you have had a prior cesarean and choose a VBAC.
- Other injury during vaginal birth



Things to Consider when Making the Decision to have a *Planned Repeat Cesarean Birth*

The decision whether to have a repeat Cesarean birth or a VBAC (vaginal birth after cesarean) is an important one that affects you, your baby, and future pregnancies. The following information is presented to help you make an informed choice.



Benefits to Mother

- Avoiding labor pain
- Avoiding problems associated with an unsuccessful trial of labor, including:
 - Blood transfusion
 - Infection of the uterus
 - Opening or tear in the uterus
- Convenience of scheduling
- Convenience if a tubal ligation (“tying the tubes”) is desired
- Less risk of uterine rupture

Risks to Mother

- Current pregnancy and delivery
 - Bleeding
 - Damage to surrounding organs
 - Increased pain after delivery
 - Increased risk of blood clots, heart and lung problems
 - Infection
 - Longer recovery
 - Re-admission to hospital for complications after surgery
 - Scars on the uterus
- Future pregnancies
 - Baby is born smaller than expected or too early
 - Extra bleeding
 - Increased rates of infertility
 - Increased risk of a tear in the uterus
 - Problems with the placenta developing in the wrong place, growing too deeply into the uterus, or separating too early.
 - Prolonged labor
 - Scar tissue that can cause problems with future surgeries and be a source of ongoing pain
 - Stillbirth

Benefits for Your Baby

- Decreased risk of a tear in the uterus during labor
- Decreased risks associated with an unsuccessful attempted vaginal birth, which may include:
 - Breathing problems and pneumonia
 - Infection
 - Jaundice (yellow color of the skin)
- Low blood sugar

Risks to Your Baby

- Decreased rates of starting and continuing with breastfeeding
- Increased risk of allergies
- Increased risk of asthma during childhood
- Increased risk of breathing problems after delivery
- Risk of being injured during surgery
- Separation from mom after delivery
- While the risk of death is low, babies born by elective repeat cesarean have an increased risk of dying due to breathing problems