Vaginal Birth After Caesarean Section (VBAC)

The odds that you will give birth vaginally after a C-section are about 3 out of 4 (75%), the same as for all labors. Unless the reason for your previous C-section is still present, a vaginal birth is safest.

Benefits of VBAC

There are many benefits to giving birth vaginally after a C-section:

- Less risk of infection, damage to internal organs, and blood loss
- Faster recovery and less discomfort after birth
- Avoids disappointment sometimes felt by women who have C-sections
- Lower cost due to shorter stay

Reasons for Caesarean Section

The reasons for having a C-section birth include:

- **Fetal position**—If the baby is in any position other than head down, a C-section may be needed for the baby’s safety.
- **Having more than one baby**—Giving birth to triplets or some sets of twins may be safest by C-section.
- **Active phase arrest** (failure to progress)—If the uterine contractions are not strong enough to dilate the cervix, even with medication (Pitocin) to make them stronger, a C-section may be needed.
- **Cephalopelvic disproportion (CPD)**—If the baby is too large for the woman’s pelvis, the baby will not be able to fit through the birth canal.

- **Fetal intolerance of labor**—The baby’s heart rate (measured with a monitor) shows that the baby is having problems with the stress of labor.

- **Umbilical cord prolapse**—The baby’s umbilical cord goes through the cervix before the baby does, which lowers the oxygen supply to the baby.

- **Problems with the placenta**—If the placenta has grown over the cervix (placenta previa), the baby may not be able to pass out of the uterus without severe bleeding from the placenta. If the placenta separates too early from the uterus (placental abruption), the baby may suffer from lack of blood or oxygen.

- **Mother’s medical problems**—Pregnancy-induced hypertension (PIH), pre-eclampsia, diabetes, or other medical problems can increase the chances of a C-section birth, especially if the mother’s or baby’s health is getting worse.

### Extra Care with VBAC Moms

The biggest medical concern is the chance that the scar from the previous C-section might open. Although the chance of this happening with a transverse scar is very low (1 per 500 births), we will do extra monitoring of you and your baby. You will have an IV (intravenous fluid) running into your arm. Your baby’s heart rate and your contractions will be monitored at all times. If Pitocin is needed to strengthen the contractions, it will be given with caution.

You or your partner may have concerns or questions about your last C-section birth. These feelings or concerns may come up during your next labor experience. Please feel free to ask questions you may have about VBAC. Talk with your care providers so that we can best help you have a safe and satisfying birth experience.