

Information on Birth Options after a Cesarean Section

What are the Advantages of ERCS?

- Knowing the date of birth. However, one in ten women go into labor before this date and sometimes this date may be changed for other reasons.
- Avoid the risk of previous scar separation, uterine tear, or rupture (1 in 1,000).
- Rare serious risks to your baby (2 in 1,000).
- Avoid risks of labor.

What are the Disadvantages of ERCS?

- A repeat caesarean section usually takes longer than the first operation because of scar tissue.
- Placental problems like placenta previa (when a baby's placenta partially or totally covers the mother's cervix) and/or placenta accreta (placenta grows too deeply into the uterine wall).
- Increased risk of bowel or bladder injury.
- Increased risk of wound infection.
- You may require a blood transfusion.
- Risk for bleeding; if not controlled, it may be necessary to remove your uterus (hysterectomy).
- High risk of developing a blood clot (thrombosis) in the legs (deep vein thrombosis) or lungs (pulmonary embolism).
- Longer hospital stays around 48-72 hours.
- The baby's skin may be cut at the time of the caesarean section (2:100) but usually heals without any further management.
- Increased risk of breathing problems for the baby.
- All future pregnancies will be by repeated cesarean section.
- Longer recovery period; extra help at home may be required.



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This leaflet provides information on birth options if you have had one previous caesarean section. It will help you better understand Vaginal Birth After Cesarean (VBAC) and Elective (planned) Repeat Cesarean Section (ERCS).

What is VBAC?

Vaginal Birth After Cesarean Section (VBAC) is normally an option for most women who have had one previous caesarean section.

Do I Have Any Choices About Delivery after a Cesarean Section?

You may be a good candidate for a VBAC. If any conditions would make vaginal birth unsafe, a planned caesarean section may be necessary. You could discuss these options with your concerned doctor during your next antenatal visit.

What are my Chances of a Successful VBAC?

If you have had a previous vaginal birth, the success rate associated with VBAC will be 87–90%. If there is no previous vaginal birth, the success of a VBAC is around 60%.

What are the Advantages of a Successful VBAC?

- A greater chance of vaginal birth in future pregnancies.
- Quicker recovery (able to quickly return to daily activities).
- Enable you to have skin-to-skin contact with your baby immediately after birth.
- Better chance for successful breastfeeding.
- Avoid caesarean section complications.
- Less chance of initial breathing problems for the baby.
- Reduced risk of general infection.
- Avoid anesthesia complications.

What are the Disadvantages of VBAC?

- You may need an emergency caesarean section. The most common reason for an emergency caesarean section is labor slowing and a concern for the wellbeing of the baby.
- Slight increase in the risk of required blood transfusion.
- Previous scar separation, uterine tear, or a rupture can occur. The risk increases if you are induced but If there are warning signs of this complication, the baby will be delivered by caesarean section.

- You may need an assisted vaginal birth, requiring the use of a vacuum or forceps delivery. There is also a chance of 3rd or 4th degree perineal tearing.
- Serious consequence for you and your baby is rare.

When is VBAC not Advisable?

- Two or more previous caesarean deliveries.
- Uterine rupture during previous labor.
- Previous caesarean section with a longitudinal (classical) incision.
- Other pregnancy complications that require a planned caesarean section.

Elective Repeated Cesarean Section (ERCS)

An elective repeated caesarean section is a planned caesarean that is performed after a previous caesarean section.

