Maternity Information Leaflet

Birth After Caesarean

Version 2.1
Giving Birth after a Caesarean Section

At our hospitals the doctors and midwives want to make the birth of your baby a safe and satisfying experience whether baby is born by caesarean section or born vaginally.

What are my options?

In this situation there are two options:

1. One is to aim for a Vaginal Birth after Caesarean (VBAC). We know that about 75% of women opting for VBAC will be successful and deliver their babies vaginally.

2. The other option is to have an elective (planned) caesarean section.

You, your midwives and doctors will discuss the advantages and disadvantages to you as an individual.

They will be able to support you and help you come to a decision that feels right for you.

You will need to take into account what has happened in previous pregnancies, how things are in this pregnancy and your own feelings about how you want to deliver your baby.
What are the advantages of a VBAC?

- Lower risk of complications
- Recovery is quicker
- You can mobilise, care for baby more easily and get back to driving more quickly
- Shorter stay in hospital
- More likely to breast feed
- Reduces the risk of problems in future pregnancies

What are the risks of VBAC?

If a woman has had a previous caesarean section there is a small risk (0.5%) of a serious complication called scar dehiscence – where the scar on the womb can open during labour. This requires medical intervention to prevent serious problems to you and your baby.

As we are aware of this potential complication we take steps to try to avoid it.

In the early stages of labour we would encourage you to remain upright and mobile as much as possible. Once labour is established we offer and recommend the following:

- Birth in hospital, so you can be monitored
- Cannulation in certain circumstances
- Continuous electronic fetal monitoring
- Close monitoring of labour progress
What are the risks of a repeat caesarean?

A caesarean section involves major abdominal surgery, so the benefits need to be weighed against the risks in each case.

- Wound or uterine infection
- Abdominal pain
- Haemorrhage
- Blood clots in legs/lungs
- Damage to bladder/bowel
- Longer stay in hospital
- Higher incidence of low lying placenta in future pregnancies
- Breathing difficulties for the baby
- Small risk of the baby sustaining an injury as the womb is opened during surgery.
Frequently Asked Questions

What if labour has to be induced?

There may be reasons why induction is required, and there are methods of inducing labour in women with a previous caesarean. However, it is clear that going into labour naturally gives the lowest risk of scar dehiscence and therefore this would be our preference. We offer a cervical sweep around your due date; and an opportunity to discuss induction with a Consultant.

I have had both a Caesarean and vaginal birth, what should I do?

It is up to you, but a woman who has had both is more likely to give birth vaginally – about 90% successful.

I have had two Caesareans before. Can I have a VBAC?

Some women who have had 2 previous caesarean sections can give birth vaginally. This would have to be discussed with your Consultant, so please ask for an appointment to be made.

Who else can I discuss this with?

Your midwife will be happy to talk to you about your options; you will also have the opportunity to meet with the Birth After Caesarean (BAC) midwife early in your pregnancy to further discuss your options.

You will also be offered an appointment with a Consultant during your pregnancy to discuss your options.
Please use this page to write down any questions you may wish to discuss with your midwife or doctor:
Further Information

There is information available about BAC on the internet. Although we cannot recommend any sources, the following websites have relevant information:

- A woman-centered, evidence based, resource centre
  www.vbac.com

- Every pregnancy is a unique journey
  www.childbirth.org

- BabyCenter
  www.pregnancy.com

- Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
  www.rcog.org.uk

Contact details:

Birth After Caesarean Midwife: 07876 475 772
Further Information

NHS Choices Website — [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
National Institute for Clinical Excellence — [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

Contact details:

**St Richard’s Hospital**, Spitalfield Lane, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 6SE

- Labour ward: 01243 831433
- Antenatal Clinic: 01243 788122 ext. 2871

**Worthing Hospital**, Lyndhurst Road, Worthing West Sussex, BN11 2DH

- Labour Ward: 01903 285138
- Antenatal Clinic: 01903 205111 ext. 84371

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