

VBAC vs. Elective Repeat Cesarean: Risks and Benefits

VBAC RISKS	VBAC BENEFITS
<p>For Mom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uterine rupture (less than 1%; in some studies only 5 per 1,000). In the event of a rupture, the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of maternal death is less than 1% (about 3 in 27,000 VBAC labors) • Increased risk of maternal infection • Need for blood transfusion • Hysterectomy (3.4 per 10,000 VBAC labors) • Same risks of any mother with no previous cesarean planning a vaginal delivery <p>For Baby:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of fetal death about 3 per 10,000 VBAC labors • Some studies indicate increased risk of brachial plexus injury and intrapartum asphyxia 	<p>For Mom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less blood loss • Shorter hospital stay/faster recovery • Fewer infections and fevers • Fewer blood clots • Lower risk of placenta problems in future pregnancies • Significant cost savings for current and future births • Mom able to participate more with baby care • Less incidence of postpartum depression <p>For Baby:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower risk of respiratory distress • Benefits of labor contractions and hormones • Mom participates more with baby care • Shorter hospital stay • Higher breastfeeding success rates
ELECTIVE REPEAT CESAREAN RISKS	ELECTIVE REPEAT CESAREAN BENEFITS
<p>For Mom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgical injury to bladder, uterus or other organs (2%) • Hemorrhage (1% - 6% require a blood transfusion) • Anesthesia complications • Pulmonary embolism (1 to 2 per 1,000), • Higher risk of infection compared to vaginal birth • Scar tissue and adhesions can lead to chronic pain and bowel problems • Increased risk of placenta problems in future pregnancies • Increased risk for future ectopic pregnancies • Increased risk of maternal death (2–4 per 10,000 surgeries compared to .5–1 per 10,000 for successful VBAC) • Increased risk of uterine rupture during future pregnancies, even without labor • 1.67 times more likely to have stroke within 3 months of birth <p>For Baby:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 to 4 times more likely to have respiratory distress • Increased incidence of asthma in childhood and adulthood • Risk of being cut/nicked during surgery • Higher rate of NICU admission than vaginally-born infants • Some studies indicate higher rate of neonatal mortality 	<p>For Mom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No labor pain or discomfort. • Lower rate of infection than if cesarean was performed after the onset of labor • Full night's rest before birth • Choose baby's birthday • No disappointment if VBAC is not achieved <p>For Baby:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some studies indicate overall perinatal mortality similar for both elective repeat cesarean and VBAC • Some studies indicate there may be lower risk of brachial plexus injury, neonatal sepsis, intracranial hemorrhage, intrapartum asphyxia, and neonatal encephalopathy

For more information, please visit: <http://www.childbirthconnection.org/article.asp?ClickedLink=293&ck=10212&area=27>