

The Right Birth for You

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Many families don't know that C-sections are considered major surgeries and can be much riskier for mothers and babies than vaginal deliveries. Although complications from C-sections are rare and usually treatable, they can sometimes be serious or even fatal. The likelihood of needing a C-section may increase when labor is induced through methods like medication or breaking the water. C-sections and inducing labor can be life-saving procedures, but they should only be done when the benefits outweigh the risk to the mother and baby.

For mother:

C-Section Risks

For baby:

- Increased risk of infection and organ injury
- Potential for allergic reactions to medication
- Higher likelihood of significant blood loss and blood clots
- Potential challenges with future pregnancies
- Longer recovery time and hospital stay, leading to increased cost

- Risk of injury during birth
- Possible negative reactions to maternal medication
- Potential for difficulty breathing immediately after birth
- Potential challenges with breastfeeding
- Baby misses exposure to helpful bacteria that strengthen the immune system

What You Can Do

- 👉 Talk to your provider about which type of delivery is best for you. Use the guide on the back of this page to help you start the conversation.
- 👉 If **vaginal delivery** is your goal, there are things you can do to prepare:
 - Learn about the **birth process** and **techniques** to help you and your baby during labor. Find a list of resources on the back of this page.
 - Ask your birthing facility how they **support mothers** aiming to have vaginal deliveries.
 - When you arrive at your facility to deliver your baby, **let your healthcare team know** vaginal delivery is your goal.
 - Pack **comfort items** such as a massager or headphones in your hospital "go-bag."
 - Choose a **support person** such as a partner or a doula to help you stay comfortable and advocate for you during labor.



Tips

- Start the conversation **early** in your pregnancy, and **reinforce** the plan as you get closer to your due date.
- Bring a **support person** with you to have the conversation.

Talking to Your Healthcare Provider About Your Birth Goals

Sample Script:

Thank you for seeing me. I want to talk about my goals for delivery. I want to plan for a vaginal delivery without induction. *Do my baby or I have any health conditions that make an induced labor or a C-section necessary or more likely?*

Yes

How can I prepare for a C-section?
What will recovery from a C-section look like?

No

How can I prepare for a vaginal delivery?
What are my pain management options during labor?
How do you support patients who would like to have a vaginal delivery?
What situations might lead you to decide an induction or C-section is necessary?

Birth Resources

-  Lamaze International - lamaze.org/childbirth-practices  Spinning Babies - spinningbabies.com
 Mother's Advocate - youtube.com/@mothersadvocate  DONA International - dona.org, to find a doula near you

References:

ACOG - acog.org/womens-health/faqs/cesarean-birth

(Neu and Rushing, 2016) doi: 10.1016/j.clp.2011.03.008

