

TOP 10 TIPS FOR PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL VBAC

- Find out the details of your previous birth experience. If you need debriefing help, find an experienced counsellor who specialises in birth trauma. Working through your previous experience and your fears can help you know what you need during your labour.
- Discuss 'risk' with your care provider. Their answers will be the best indicator of their willingness to support VBAC. Don't be afraid to change your care provider, even very late on in your pregnancy.
- Remember that you have a very good chance of having a vaginal birth – 72-75% if you have not previously had a vaginal birth, and 85-90% if you have ([RCOG](#)). Overall, you have a greater likelihood of a vaginal birth than a woman having her first baby and no previous c-section.
- The [RCOG guidelines](#) state that: *“Women should be made aware that successful VBAC has the fewest complications and therefore the chance of VBAC success or failure is an important consideration when choosing the mode of delivery.”* Therefore it is important to consider previous birth scenarios and contexts to evaluate the chance of success for the individual woman.
- The following factors have a major bearing on your chance of a successful VBAC ; choosing supportive care providers (and setting), avoiding having your labour induced or augmented.
- Talk about the possibility of the pregnancy going beyond the prescribed 'due date'. This is often a feature of VBAC pregnancy. Some hospitals or midwives consider this to be a risk factor because the chance of a repeat c-section is about 9% greater (Coassolo [et al. 2005](#)). However, the risk of uterine rupture is no greater.
- Having a c-section after labour has started holds more health benefits than a planned c-section. Your baby will have had a chance to initiate labour and make the physiological changes needed for life outside the uterus. They will be less likely to suffer respiratory distress and end up in special care ([Senturk et al. 2015](#)). In addition, both mother and baby will have the important cocktail of hormones that assist with bonding. Even if you do choose a repeat c-section, you can insist on going into labour first.
- If you are planning to birth in hospital you need to know what the hospital policies are and decide what you will or won't go along with. This means talking about the risks of the usual interventions such as CTG monitoring. A very clear birth statement can help the staff to support your wishes. It might be helpful to find out the VBAC rates at the hospital to gain some idea about how supportive they are likely to be during labour.
- Talk to other women about their experiences of VBAC, read positive birth stories and watch beautiful VBAC birth movies.
- Do not use disempowering language such a 'trial of scar' or constantly refer to your birth as a VBAC. You are a woman having a baby, not a disaster waiting to happen.