

Pregnancy after multiple previous Caesarean births

This information is to inform you of concerns that may arise if you have previously had one or more Caesarean births. Caesarean delivery is associated with an increased risk of problems in subsequent pregnancies. The chance of complications rises as the number of prior Caesarean operations increases.

Risks that you need to consider

- You may discuss a vaginal birth after Caesarean (VBAC). For most women who have had just one Caesarean, this is a safe option to explore. The risks and benefits of this would be discussed by your obstetric (childbirth) team, including how you would be supported and cared for in labour.
- However, you are more likely to need a planned Caesarean delivery in a future pregnancy.
 - A repeat Caesarean operation usually takes longer than the first operation because of scar tissue. This can make the operation more difficult and can result in damage to your bowel or bladder. More scar tissue occurs with each Caesarean operation.
 - You can get a wound infection that can take several weeks to heal.
 - You may need a blood transfusion.
 - You have a higher risk of developing a blood clot (thrombosis) in the legs (deep vein thrombosis) or lungs (pulmonary embolism).
 - You may have a longer recovery period and may need extra help at home. You will be unable to drive for about 6 weeks after surgery (check with your insurance company).
 - There is a very small risk of uterine rupture (where the scar on the womb can begin to tear, or fully open).
 - There is a higher risk that the placenta will be low lying (placenta praevia). This risk is 1 in 500 women with a history of one or no previous Caesarean, but this rises tenfold to 1 in 50 for those with a history of two or more prior Caesareans
 - Assisted reproductive technology and maternal smoking also increase the risk of placenta praevia. (Link to RCOG leaflet: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/patient-leaflets/a-low-lying-placenta-after-20-weeks-placenta-praevia/>)
 - Just one Caesarean increases the possibility of the placenta attaching onto the scar, causing a placenta accreta (this risk is doubled compared to women who have not had a Caesarean birth).
 - For mothers who have had two or more Caesarean births, the placenta may also grow into the scar, making it difficult to remove during any future deliveries (placenta percreta). This can result in severe bleeding and may require a hysterectomy.

Please see this link for further information: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/patient-leaflets/birth-after-previous-Caesarean/>

If you have any concerns or questions, please discuss any of the points above with the Fertility Team. **All serious risks increase with every Caesarean operation you have.**

Where can I get more information?

The clinic doctors produce a number of information sheets especially for this clinic and update them frequently. You can find some of these sheets on the Trust website leaflet catalogue <https://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/leaflets-catalogue/> by typing in the leaflet name.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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