

## Understanding the Risks of Elective (Non-medically Indicated) Cesarean Birth with your First Pregnancy

Birth is a normal, natural process. The vast majority of women can have safe, normal vaginal births. There are health conditions where a cesarean birth is necessary for the wellbeing of the mother and/or the baby. Recently however, more mothers are giving birth by cesarean for non-medical reasons. A cesarean poses risks as well as benefits for mother and baby, and should not be undertaken lightly.

Expectant Mothers Name:

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Obstetrician (OB Physician):

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*A cesarean delivery is an operation where a baby is delivered by making a cut in the mother's lower abdominal wall (abdominal incision) and a cut in her uterus (uterine incision). A cesarean operation is a major surgical procedure with additional risks beyond those of a vaginal delivery.*

### RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH A CESAREAN AS COMPARED TO A VAGINAL BIRTH:

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| 1. I am more likely to have more blood loss and a longer recovery time.  | 7. I am more likely to develop blood clots that can travel to my lungs (pulmonary embolism) or my brain (stroke).  |
| 2. I am more likely to have accidental surgical cuts to my bladder, bowel, or gastrointestinal tract.  | 8. I am more likely to be admitted to intensive care.  |
| 3. I am more likely to have a serious infection in my incision, uterus, or bladder.  | 9. I am more likely to need to return to the hospital for complications from the cesarean operation.   |
| 4. I am more likely to have thick scarring (adhesions) inside my abdomen that may cause chronic pain for years after my cesarean. This scarring can make any future abdominal operation I may need more difficult. | 10. I am more likely to feel pain and/or numbness at the surgical site for several months after my surgery.  |
| 5. I may have uncontrolled bleeding and need an emergency hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) if the bleeding cannot be stopped.  | 11. I am more likely to have a repeat cesarean delivery if I choose to undergo a cesarean for my first delivery.   |
| 6. I am more likely to have complications from anesthesia.   | 12. I am more likely to experience "high risk" conditions in subsequent pregnancies, such as ectopic pregnancy, infertility, and abnormal attachments of the placenta to the uterine wall. |

**I have read and understand the risks associated with a cesarean delivery vs. a vaginal delivery.**

PATIENT SIGNATURE:

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PATIENT NAME:

DATE:

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This form was adapted with permission from Hoag Hospital; original educational content is from the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS)