

Module 9
If I Want a VBAC,
Where Can I Give Birth?
Hospital? Birth Center? Home?

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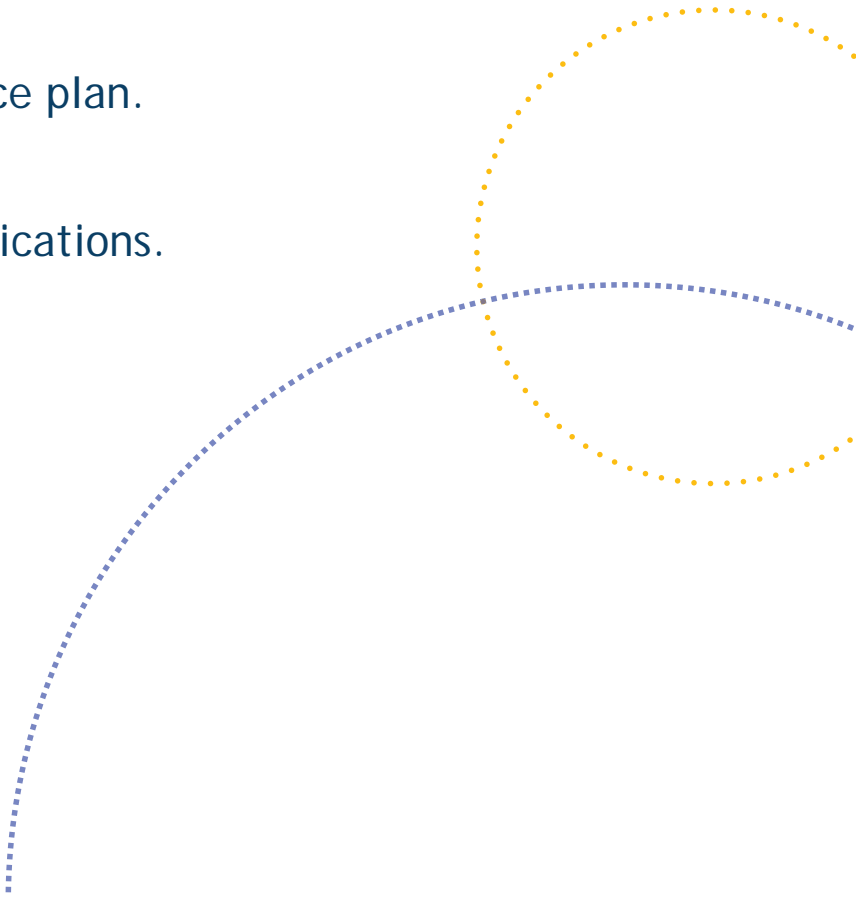
Planning a Hospital VBAC

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Advantages of Planning a Hospital VBAC

- Your birth is likely to be covered by your insurance plan.
 - You can have an epidural.
 - You'll have access to a cesarean in case of complications.
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Disadvantages of Planning a Hospital VBAC

- You're more likely to have routine interventions that complicate labor.
- You're more likely to have labor augmented with oxytocin if your labor slows down.
- You're less likely to have freedom of movement.
- You're less likely to have a variety of methods of pain relief.



VBAC-Friendly Hospitals

- Although many hospitals do not offer medical care for VBAC, some have made it possible to work with a mother's birth plan and still provide safe care.
- You and your baby may be monitored with a telemetry unit giving you the freedom to walk around the labor and delivery floor.
- Your caregiver may establish an IV site (Heparin Lock) in case you may need a cesarean but not attach it to any fluids if not necessary.
- Your own physician may agree to stay in the hospital until you give birth.

Dr. Tami Michele, DO, Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Gerber Memorial Hospital, Fremont, Michigan. Personal communications.
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Some Hospitals Develop Their Own Guidelines to Support VBAC

- ◉ Some hospitals without “immediate” capability for an emergency cesarean may ask mothers to sign a *Refusal of Repeat Cesarean* form before formally admitting them on the labor and delivery unit.¹
- ◉ This allows mothers to labor for a VBAC with the understanding of the hospital’s staffing capabilities and response time in case a cesarean is needed.
- ◉ See an example of Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial Hospital’s *Refusal of Repeat Cesarean* form (as a pdf) in the *Resources for Parents*.

1. See Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial, Refusal of Repeat Cesarean Form in the Resources for Parents list.

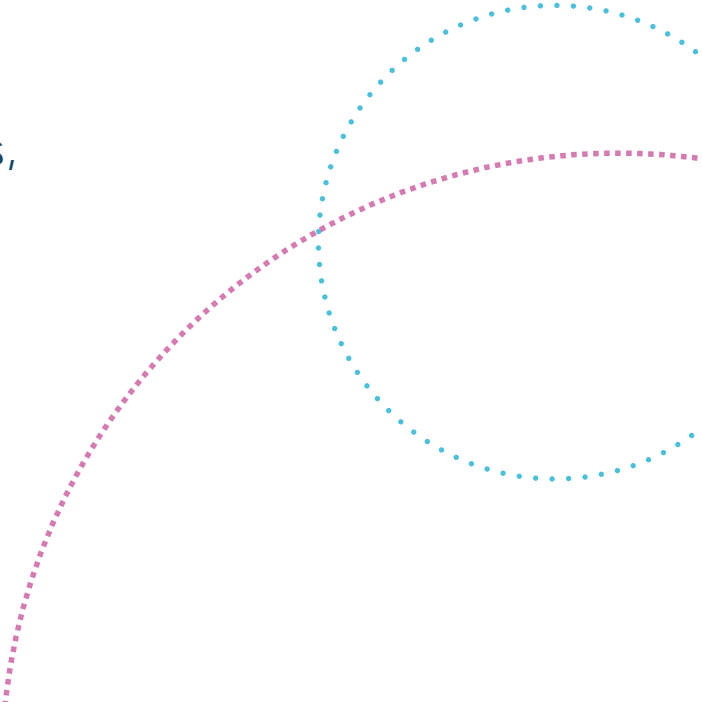
Look for a **Supportive** Maternity Care Team



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To Increase Your Odds for a VBAC **Look for a Supportive Maternity Care Team**

- How do your caregivers view VBAC? With confidence or fear?
 - Are they giving you enough information to help you make decisions about your birth?
 - Are your care providers taking the time to answer your questions? To discuss the benefits and risks of treatments, procedures, and drugs?
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Look for a **Supportive Maternity Care Team**

- Are they treating you with respect?
- Are they supportive of your wishes?
- Do they make you feel safe?
- Do they view labor and birth as a normal process?
- Do they encourage doulas, family members or partners to help you when you give birth?

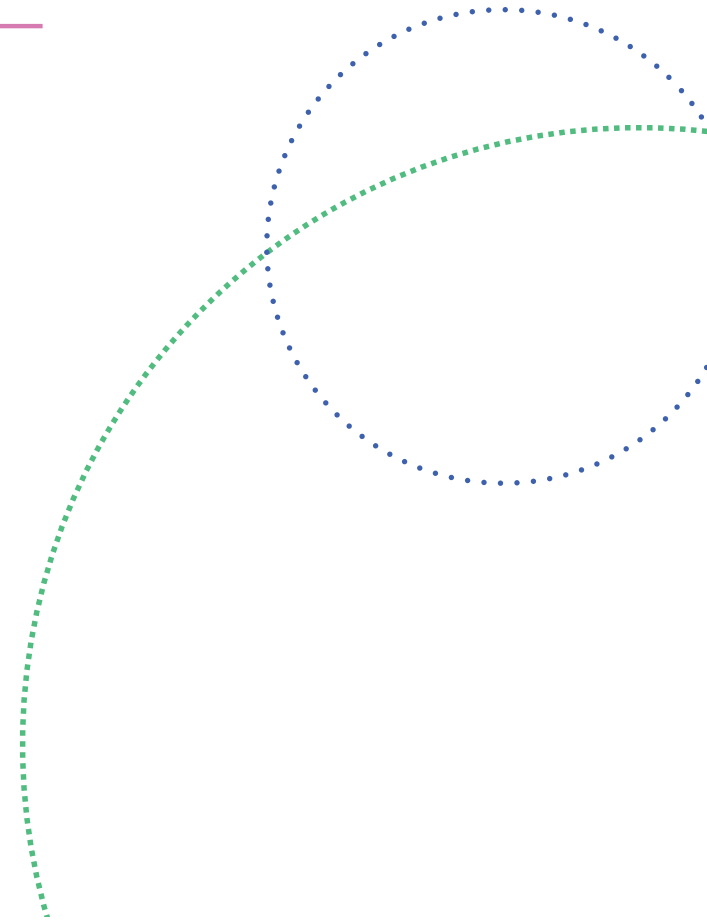
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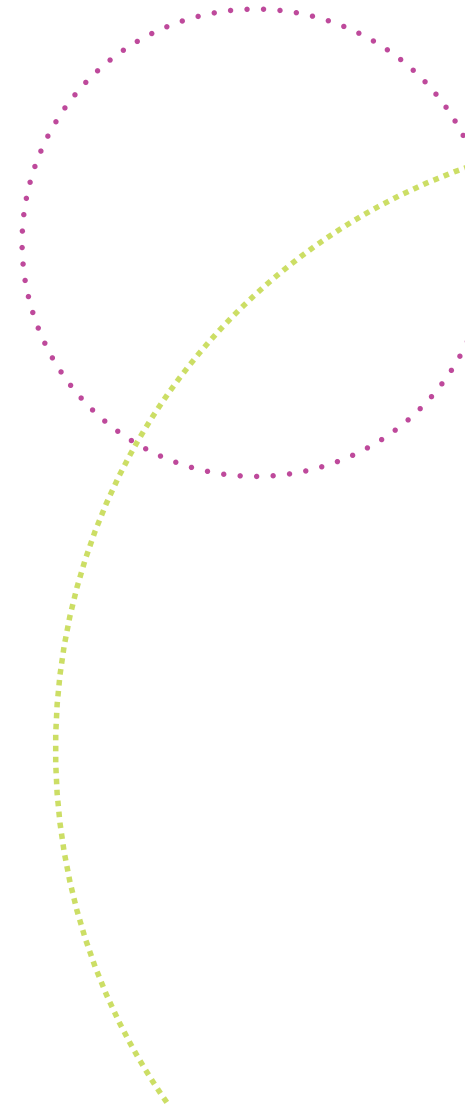
Supportive Maternity Care Team

- Do they offer community resources that may be helpful to you such as a VBAC support group, prenatal yoga class, childbirth class, websites?
- What are your caregivers' hesitations about VBAC? Can you discuss them so that you can labor with confidence?
- If they are not comfortable with VBAC, are they giving you referrals to other providers, birth centers or hospitals that support VBAC?
- If you don't feel that your caregiver can give you full support to labor for a VBAC, are you willing to consider making a change?



Look for a Supportive Environment in Which to Give Birth

- ⦿ Do you have access to a bath, birthing tub, or shower?
- ⦿ Do you have the space to walk? Sit? Kneel?
- ⦿ Do you have access to light foods and drink?
- ⦿ Can the light be dimmed? Can noise be reduced?
- ⦿ Can you listen to the music of your choice?
- ⦿ Do you have privacy?
- ⦿ Do you have a squat bar, birth stool, rocking chair or birth ball?
- ⦿ Do you have furniture, pillows or a bed rail to lean on?



VBAC-Friendly Care

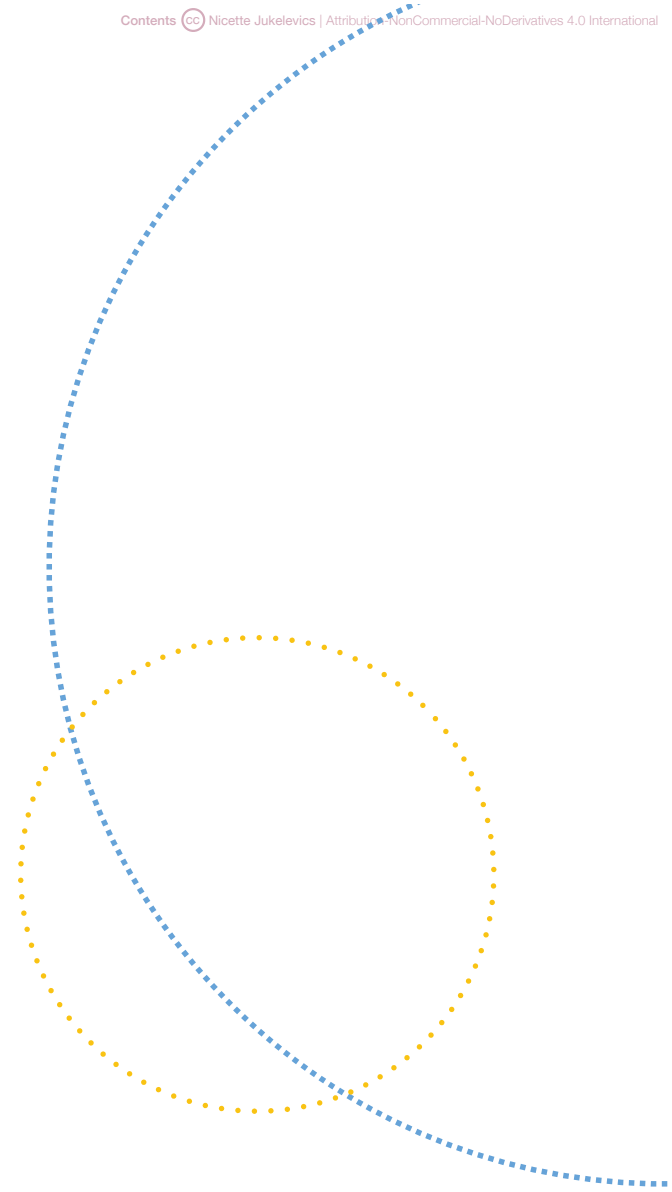
With VBAC-friendly caregivers who provide safe care while respecting your informed choices and a birthing environment that provides a variety of options to ease your pain and help your labor progress you have an excellent chance of giving birth normally.

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Key Points to Review

- ◉ For many mothers, planning a VBAC in a hospital is the only option available. There are benefits and disadvantages.
- ◉ A hospital with low intervention and cesarean rates and high VBAC rates is more likely to be fully supportive of VBAC.
- ◉ Some hospitals have created VBAC supportive guidelines to give mothers what they need to have a safe vaginal birth.





Checklist for Parents

Questions to Ask for Birth in a Hospital

- ◉ What is your cesarean and VBAC rate?
- ◉ What are your intervention rates (induction, routine use of IV, continuous fetal monitoring)?
- ◉ Do you support non-drug methods of pain relief?
- ◉ Does your facility have VBAC guidelines? What are they?
- ◉ What protocols are left up to the doctor's or midwife's preference?
- ◉ Do you have a time limit for labor or birth?

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Questions to Ask for Birth in a Hospital

- ◉ Can I have my family members with me?
- ◉ Can I have my baby with me, skin-to-skin after birth?
- ◉ Do you have a lactation specialist to help me with breastfeeding?
- ◉ How do you respond to a potential non-vbac emergency such as a placental abruption (placenta separates from the uterine wall before the baby is born), fetal distress, shoulder dystocia or an umbilical cord prolapse?
- ◉ Can you refer me to another hospital that does support VBAC?





Resources for Parents

- ◉ **American College of Nurse Midwives**
Using Water for Labor and Birth
 - ◉ **BirthNetwork National**
Finding a Mother-Friendly Care Provider
 - ◉ **Choices in Childbirth**
Choose Your Birth Team
 - ◉ **Childbirth Connection**
Choosing a Caregiver: What You Need to Know
Choosing a Place of Birth: What You Need to Know
Understanding & Navigating the Maternity Care System
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Resources for Parents

- ◉ **Coalition for Improving Maternity Services**
Having a Baby? Ten Questions to Ask
 - ◉ **Contra Costa Regional Medical Center (California)**
Vaginal Birth After Cesarean Improvement Project (video)
 - ◉ **International Cesarean Awareness Network**
VBAC Policies in U.S. Hospitals
 - ◉ **Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial Hospital**
Refusal of Repeat Cesarean Form [\[Appendix A in Teaching Guide\]](#)
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