



VBAC Policies in US Hospitals

By webmaster

Published: Feb 11 2008 - 10:03pm

How to Use the VBAC Policy Database

If you are considering your options for planning a vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC) then you need to know where you will be welcomed as a mother planning a VBAC. Approximately 30% of all the hospitals in the U.S. have official policies *against* VBAC and if you choose that hospital as the birth-place for your child, you will encounter fierce opposition to having a vaginal birth. It is of paramount importance to know ahead of time (ideally, before you are pregnant) what choices you really have.

The information collected here was collected by women who called each hospital and asked a series of questions designed to do several things. First, we wanted to identify those hospitals that have official bans against VBAC in place. In some ways, these were the simplest calls. It is unlikely that we are mistaken about these hospitals. The more difficult hospitals were those with **de facto** bans in place. This is defined as a hospital that indicates there is no official policy against VBAC but in reality there are no doctors who will agree to attend one. Our callers asked a series of questions to try to accurately identify hospitals where there is no official ban but there is no option for VBAC. Needless to say, it is extremely important to know what your selected attendant (obstetrician or midwife) really thinks about VBAC, no matter what any given hospital may have as an official policy.



It is very important to understand that even the hospitals that do “allow” VBAC, and that were able to give us names of physicians who are known to support VBAC, very few of these hospitals actually do very many VBACs. We would estimate that no more than 10% of the hospitals we called were truly “VBAC supportive”, based on the comments of the people we talked to. We recorded comments into the database when we had them and you can read what we were told. This is also information you should consider in your decision-making process.

When you read the comments, please understand that we recorded them as they were given to us and they often contain statements that are contradicted by the medical evidence about VBAC. Sometimes the reasons given for a VBAC ban (“it’s illegal”) are simply untrue. There is NO legal or regulatory proscription against VBAC anywhere in the United States. We found that there was wide variation in knowledge about VBAC, even in experienced Labor & Delivery nurses.

As always, you need to call any hospital you are considering and ask the hard questions yourself. Policies change, people who answer the phone can be uninformed and we don’t guarantee any of the information collected here. We are a community of women seeking out the most informed birth choices possible. We welcome your contributions to this pool of information.

There is a section at the bottom of each listing for you to submit comments and we hope that you will let other women know what your experience with any specific hospital or physician/midwife was.



You are also welcome to contact our VBAC Ban Chair, [Barbara Stratton](#) with information you might have that we need to consider as we continue to update the database. Input directly from hospitals and physicians is welcome as well. Thank you.
