



## **GENERAL RISKS**

**General:** Fatigue, nausea, breast tenderness, and weight gain

**Nerves and Brain:** Worsening headaches or migraines, seizures and eclampsia, strokes, carpal tunnel syndrome, back pain, sciatica

**Psychological:** Increased moodiness, depression, anxiety, and postpartum depression

**Lungs:** Worsening allergies or asthma, shortness of breath, pulmonary emboli (clot of blood in lung), pulmonary edema (fluid filling up lung)

**Heart:** Heart attack or other damage to heart, high blood pressure and preeclampsia

**Stomach, Intestines, Liver:** Nausea and vomiting, weight loss, weight gain, liver damage, gallstone disease, heartburn and reflux disease, constipation, diarrhea

**Kidneys:** Kidney disease, kidney stones, kidney failure, bladder and kidney infections

**Hormones:** Diabetes, thyroid disease

**Bladder and Female Organs:** Urine or bowel incontinence, ovarian cysts, enlarged fibroids, pelvic pain

**Obstetrical:** Miscarriage, preterm labor, fetal death, fetal abnormalities including genetic abnormalities, poor fetal growth, large fetal growth, uterine infections, secondary infertility, neonatal death

**Legs and Veins:** Varicose veins, blood clots in legs, leg cramps, swelling in legs

**Skin and Hair:** Stretch marks, darkening of skin on face and abdomen, growth of skin tags or moles, dry skin, dry hair, marked hair growth with marked hair loss postpartum

**Joints:** Worsening of lupus, development of rheumatoid arthritis

**Cancers:** Development or recurrence of breast cancer or other cancers

**Social:** Increased incidence of domestic violence during pregnancy

## **RISKS AND BENEFITS OF A VAGINAL BIRTH**

### **Benefits:**

- Faster recovery
- More natural delivery
- Mom and baby stay together during entire postpartum period as long as baby is healthy

### **Risks and Disadvantages:**

- Painful labor contractions
- Infection of uterus during labor or following delivery, this infection can be transmitted to the baby
- Damage of pelvic floor leading to urine or bowel incontinence
- Failure to progress to delivery, requiring intervention with medicines to increase strength of labor, can also lead to the need for vacuum or cesarean delivery
- Fetal distress requiring intervention and possible emergency cesarean delivery
- Blood loss which, if extreme, may require blood transfusion
- Episiotomy or laceration repair leading to scar tissue formation
- Painful or reduced pleasure during sexual intercourse
- Shoulder dystocia (tight fit of baby through pelvis) leading to nerve and/or brain damage to baby
- Difficulty or delay in delivery of placenta, may require operation to remove completely to stop bleeding
- Prolonged bleeding that if not controlled, may require a hysterectomy for control of bleeding

## **RISKS AND BENEFITS OF CESAREAN DELIVERY**

### **Benefits:**

- Avoidance of labor
- Planned delivery day (assuming you do not go into labor prior to scheduled day)
- Possible decrease in risks of developing urine or bowel incontinence from pelvic floor relaxation
- Postpartum tubal ligation easier to perform at time of surgery

Avoidance of labor related complications to baby such as fetal distress or shoulder dystocia (baby getting stuck in pelvis)

### **Risks and Disadvantages:**

- Requires anesthesia medicines for procedure with either spinal or general anesthesia
- Only one person allowed with you in delivery room, assuming you have spinal anesthesia
- Baby usually observed in nursery following delivery, meaning mom and baby are separated for around two hours
- Infection in skin, incision, or uterus
- Postoperative complications with incision such as bleeding or infection
- Increased bleeding compared to vaginal delivery, may require blood transfusion
- Damage to bowel, bladder, or ureters during surgery
- Post operative pain
- Prolonged hospitalization and prolonged recovery time after delivery
- Scar on skin which may be cosmetically unpleasant
- Scar tissue in abdominal cavity which can lead to pelvic pain
- Increased risk of problems with following pregnancy including tubal pregnancy, placenta accrete (where placenta grows into uterus and becomes difficult to separate), and stillbirth (when baby dies prior to delivery)
- Increased risk of attempting vaginal delivery in following pregnancy, with one in one hundred chance of rupturing (opening) of uterine scar; this can lead to fetal distress and possibly death to baby and mom
- Bleeding that does not stop may lead to the need for a hysterectomy (removal of uterus) to control bleeding