

VBAC/TOLAC Questions and Conversation Prompts for Health Care Providers

QUESTIONS FROM CLIENTS

SUGGESTED RESPONSES

Shared Decision-Making Process	
I am really unsure and have not been able to make a decision yet.	<p><i>I understand that this is a hard decision to make. Can we discuss ways that will help you make your decision?</i></p> <p><i>Have you completed the website called “My Next Birth”? Would you like to go over it together and I can answer any questions you may have?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anyone else in your life, close friends or family, who can support you and help you decide?</i></p> <p><i>Do you have any questions or thoughts about your previous birth that are affecting your decision making?</i></p> <p><i>Would you like additional counseling support?</i></p>
What do you recommend?	<i>My recommendations are based on the best available evidence and what I understand about your personal values. Based on the evidence, your values and preferences, and your health and previous birth history I recommend . . .</i>
I have almost decided but wonder if I can change my mind at any point?	<i>You can change your mind at any time, it is your body. Decision making is an ongoing process. Sometimes circumstances change or you get new information. If you have questions or want to revisit your decision, please let me know.</i>
Information Exchange	
Which option is safest for me and for my baby?	<i>People benefit from up-to-date, consistent information. Explore the table that was shared with them on the My Next Birth decision aid to guide this discussion.</i>
Is there any point to planning VBAC if I just end up with another c/s?	<i>Yes. There are so many benefits! Experiencing labour stimulates oxytocin, a hormone that helps in the production of breastmilk and bonding with your baby. Experiencing labour helps your baby come in contact with microbes that help to train the baby’s immune system and may protect against obesity, allergies, and Type 1 diabetes. Labour also helps to clear fluid from your baby’s lungs.</i>
Because of what happened at my previous birth I think a c/s would be safest for me.	<p><i>I understand that your previous birth experience impacts your decision making as you plan for your next birth. Can we talk about your previous birth and your concerns about how it impacts your next birth?</i></p> <p><i>What questions do you have about your birth?</i></p>

	<p><i>Is there anything else you wish we could have done to support you?</i></p> <p><i>What concerns do you have about future births?</i></p> <p><i>Based on my understanding of the medical details of your previous birth planning a VBAC or a caesarean birth are both safe options for you. Let's explore your values and preferences further.</i></p>
<p>Exploring Values and Preferences</p>	
<p>I'm scared of pain, but I understand that a VBAC is the safest option for my baby – what should I do?</p>	<p><i>I often hear from people that they are afraid of the pain of birthing. I would like to understand more about your past experience with pain or fear of pain and I would like to share information with you about how we would help you manage pain while birthing whether that is by caesarean or vaginally. I would also like to discuss your recovery after birth, by c/s or vaginally, and how we can support you with managing pain during that time. Do you have specific beliefs about vaginal birth or c-sections that you can share so we can help share more information on what you want best for you and your baby?</i></p> <p>Following this information exchange, it might be helpful for the person to discuss this information with other support people and/or it might be helpful for them to return to What Matters Most to Me decision support tool. Plan to revisit the decision at a later time to determine if a decision has been reached.</p>
<p>I prefer to plan for a VBAC and value moving around in labour. I would like to decline external fetal monitoring.</p>	<p><i>I am so happy you want to move around while in labour, I agree that mobility in labour is helpful. I would like to explain what the machine does and explore ways we can support you to move around in labour while still monitoring your baby continuously. Would that be ok with you?</i></p> <p>If yes - discuss mobility options with EFM</p> <p>If no - because they continue to decline EFM continue discussion to explore values and to confirm understanding of the information they have received.</p> <p><i>You feel strongly about declining EFM. It is important for us to have a conversation about the reason EFM is recommended when planning a VBAC. Would you share with me what you have learnt about EFM and VBAC?</i></p> <p>Confirm that they understand the recommendation and the risks and benefits associated with this recommendation. If they continue to decline EFM -</p>

	<i>I recommend EFM for those planning a VBAC. Your decisions will be respected, and you can change your mind at any time. I will document our discussion and your decision. Decision making is an ongoing process so we will bring to your attention any additional information or concerns that we have as your pregnancy and birth unfolds so that you are able to reassess your decision.</i>
I want a c/s because it's most convenient for me.	<i>What are the reasons a c/s would be more convenient for you? How do you feel about labour starting on its own?</i>
	<i>One in three women go into labour prior to their scheduled c/s. What are your preferences if you go in to labour prior to a scheduled c/s?</i>
Preferred Choice, Feasibility, and Actual Choice	
I want a c/s but hear its best for baby to be born as close to 40wks as possible.	Discuss when and how caesareans are booked at your hospital. Discuss the risks and benefits of booking a c/s close to 40wks. Explore values and preferences if they go in to labour prior to their scheduled c/s. Following this information exchange and exploration of values confirm if their preferred choice is still for a c/s moving forward.
Being skin to skin with my baby after birth and staying with my baby are really important to me and I prefer to have a caesarean birth.	Discuss caesarean care at your site including how skin to skin is provided after birth and post c/s recovery with the baby. Explore with them how they feel and how this might impact their decision if these are not possible after their birth. Following this information exchange and exploration of values confirm if their preferred choice for a c/s will be their actual choice moving forward.
I want to plan a VBAC and it's important for me that my other children are looked after properly. I am concerned that if I end up with a c/s and I am in the hospital for days that I can't plan for their childcare in advance.	Discuss the challenge of planning for childcare given the unpredictability of spontaneous labour. Explore their values and preferences for a VBAC and for planning appropriate childcare for their other children. Following this information exchange and exploration of values confirm if their preferred choice for planning a VBAC will be their actual choice moving forward.

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