

[IMAGE]

A Labor of Love

Mothers often point out to their children how much pain they had to endure giving birth (so their children will have sympathy and obey them!). This tactic may not be so common in the future, however. Women are increasingly opting to deliver through more convenient Caesarean sections, despite no medical necessity for surgery in many cases.

A recent study released by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) evaluated the success of its recent goal to reduce the number of C-sections in favor of natural births. Twenty-three percent of births were Caesarean in 2000, but the CDC would like to see only 15% of first-time mothers delivering by C-section. To follow current trends, the CDC examined California's rates of vaginal births after Caesarean births (VBACs) from 1996-2000 birth certificates.

The report indicated that VBACs actually decreased by 35% in the four-year period. In other words, merely 15% of women who had previously undergone C-sections chose to have a vaginal birth in a subsequent pregnancy in 2000. Women appear to be opting for more C-sections, rather than fewer, in a reverse from trends in the '80s and '90s.

Countless studies show that vaginal births are safer for both mother and infant than Caesarean births. So why don't women choose this natural form of birth? If you are pregnant, give birth naturally unless your doctor advises you otherwise. It may be a more painful, longer labor than if you have a C-section, but at least you can use it for "guilt-trip" material when your kids get older!

Reference:

Chavez GF, Takahashi E, et al. Vaginal birth after cesarean birth - California, 1996-2000. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (CDC) 2002;51(44), pp. 996-998.

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