

# Becoming knowledgeable about your pregnancy



## Know your body, know your baby

Pregnancy is an exciting time and sometimes a stressful experience. It's natural to worry a bit throughout the different stages of your pregnancy. The best antidote to worry or fear is to be knowledgeable and ask your doctor or healthcare provider questions. They will provide you with information that is based on you and your baby's best interest. While you can't have control over everything, you can make more informed decisions about the things you can control.

### Miscarriage and high-risk pregnancy

Even though there are many reasons for miscarriages, that doesn't mean they're predictable. When you go over your health history with your doctor, ask about conditions associated with a higher rate of miscarriage and a high-risk pregnancy. It's important that you go see your doctor for a thorough exam, and keep your follow-up appointments during your pregnancy, even if you're feeling fine. Proactively learning about your potential risks can help you prevent possible complications throughout your pregnancy.

### Natural birth or caesarean section<sup>1,2</sup>

Natural birth (or vaginal birth) is the most common form of delivery. A Cesarean (or C-section) is an alternative form of delivery and is considered major surgery, which requires an incision in your belly and uterus to deliver your baby. A C-section is generally only recommended when there is a health or safety issue for the mother or

baby. Advanced planning for a C-section is usually not recommended in the absence of any health or safety issues due to the risks associated with this major surgery, which can include heavy bleeding, infection, blood clots, injury to the bowel or bladder and a longer recovery period.

Talk to your doctor if you have plans for more than one child. Multiple C-sections may pose a greater risk to the mother. If you and your provider agree to try a vaginal birth after a Cesarean (commonly referred to as a VBAC), you will have what is called a "trial of labor after Cesarean" (TOLAC). This means that you will plan to go into labor with the goal to deliver naturally. Since it is hard to predict if a VBAC will work without complications, you may still need a C-section. Establishing a delivery plan with your doctor is the best way to prepare for the delivery of your baby.

### Depression and anxiety<sup>3</sup>

Depression or feelings of anxiousness aren't uncommon while pregnant, and it certainly isn't your fault if you feel like you're having trouble coping with your pregnancy or new baby. If you start to feel extremely anxious or overwhelmed by sadness or emptiness that just won't go away, tell your doctor. Depression and anxiety are very real pregnancy conditions, so don't dismiss them during or after your pregnancy or try to suffer through them alone.

Sources:

1. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Cesarean Birth, May 2020. Available from [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org).
2. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Vaginal Birth after Cesarean Section, October 2020. Available from [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org).
3. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Postpartum Depression, December 2021. Available from [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org).

---

The information and materials included in MetLife's Health and Wellness Information Library, including all toolkits, modules, template communications, text, charts, graphics and other materials, (collectively, the "Content") are intended to provide general guidance on health and wellness matters and are not, and should not be relied on as, medical advice. While the Content is based on resources that MetLife believes to be well-documented, MetLife is not responsible for the accuracy of the Content, and you rely on the Content at your own risk. Each person's condition and health circumstances are unique, and therefore the Content may not apply to you. The Content is not a substitute for professional medical advice. You should always consult your licensed health care professional for the diagnosis and treatment of any medical condition and before starting or changing your health regimen, including seeking advice regarding what drugs, diet, exercise routines, physical activities or procedures are appropriate for your particular condition and circumstances.