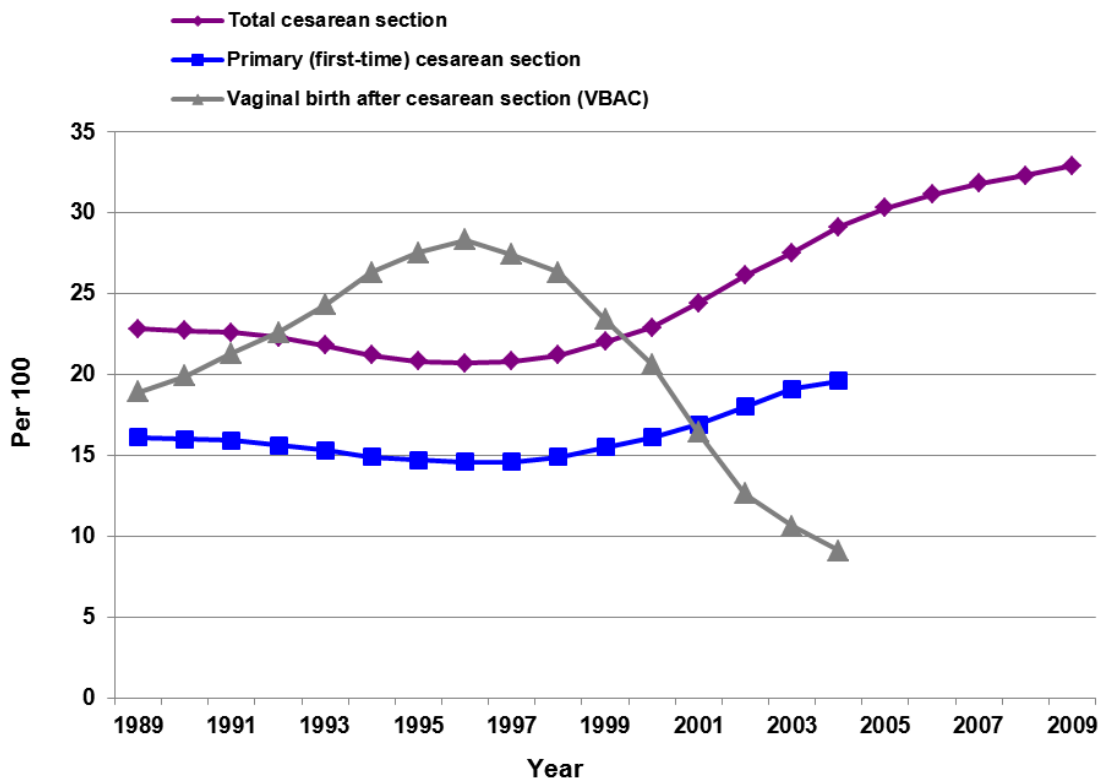


Rates for Total Cesarean Section, Primary Cesarean Section, and Vaginal Birth After Cesarean (VBAC), United States, 1989-2009

In December 2010, the National Center for Health Statistics released the preliminary U.S. national cesarean rate for 2009: 32.9%. This rate has increased by 50% over the past decade, reaching a record level every year in this century, as shown in the chart below. The most common operating room procedure in U.S. hospitals, cesarean section involves considerable morbidity in women and babies and considerable expense for private payers/employers and Medicaid/taxpayers.



Source: U.S. National Center for Health Statistics

Notes:

2009 total cesarean rate is provisional.

National rates of primary cesarean and VBAC are not available from 2005 onward due to jurisdictions' use of both unrevised (1989) and revised (2003) birth certificate forms, with different methods of data collection. See the following table for the primary cesarean and VBAC rates in jurisdictions using the revised form, 2005-2008.

Data are not available to delineate national trends in rates of primary cesarean section and vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC) from 2005 onward, due to the pattern of adopting the revised (2003) birth certificate form across jurisdictions over time. However, patterns of use of primary cesarean section and VBAC have crucial implications for childbearing women and families; and there is widespread concern about overuse of cesarean section and lack of access to VBAC. The following birth certificate data are provided to help understand recent patterns of use. It would be inappropriate to compare figures from year to year due to the changing demographic composition of the cohorts as jurisdictions migrate to the revised 2003 form. For extensive information about the 2003 birth certificate revisions, see http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vital_certificate_revisions.htm.

| Primary Cesarean and VBAC Rates Collected from Revised (2003) U.S. Birth Certificates, 2005-2008 | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Primary cesarean rate | VBAC rate | Number of states using certificate | % of total U.S. births |
| 2005 | 24.3% | 10.1% | 12 | 31% |
| 2006 | 23.5% | 8.5% | 19 | 49% |
| 2007 | 23.4% | 8.3% | 22 | 53% |
| 2008 | 23.8% | 8.4% | 27 | 65% |

Source: U.S. National Center for Health Statistics

Notes:

By January 1, 2005, the following states migrated to use of the revised (2003) birth certificate: Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York State (excluding New York City), Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington.

By January 1, 2006, seven additional states migrated to use of the revised (2003) birth certificate: California, Delaware, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming.

By January 1, 2007, three additional states migrated to use of the revised (2003) birth certificate: Colorado, Indiana, and Iowa.

By January 1, 2008 New York City and five additional states migrated to use of the revised (2003) birth certificate: Georgia, Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, and Oregon.