Planned caesarean section for twin pregnancies

What’s best for mums?
We already know that having a caesarean increases the chance of problems in future pregnancies.

We wanted to find out if having a planned caesarean made a difference in this birth to the number of mums who had serious health problems or died.

Women didn’t always have the birth that had been planned:

- Planned caesarean section
- Planned vaginal birth

91 women out of 100 had a caesarean section
43 women out of 100 had an emergency caesarean section for at least one twin

There was no clear evidence that planning a caesarean section rather than a vaginal birth made a difference to the number of mums who died, had serious health problems, or had postnatal depression.

What does this mean?
Planned caesarean section does not seem to be better than planned vaginal delivery for pregnant women and twin babies (around their due date and in a head-first position).

There is not enough evidence to support routine caesarean section for women giving birth to twins. Women should be told about possible risks and benefits of the options, for this birth and future pregnancies.

We need to find out if the type of birth makes a difference to these children when they are older.

What’s best for babies?
We wanted to know if planned caesarean section made a difference to the number of baby twins who had health problems or who died.

- Planned caesarean section
- Planned vaginal birth

About 2 out of 100 babies in each group had serious health problems or died.

There was no clear evidence that planning a caesarean section rather than a vaginal birth made a difference to the number of babies who died, had serious health problems, or were breastfed.

With information from just 2 studies, it’s difficult to know if there is no difference for babies, or if we need to study more births.

The studies did not look at long-term outcomes, such as disability in childhood.

Planned caesarean section for women with a twin pregnancy
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Full review: http://ow.ly/XF9qm

What is this review about?
Twins have a higher risk of premature birth, health problems, and death when being born than single babies.

Some of these problems may be avoided if the babies are born by planned caesarean section. However, caesareans have risks for the mother in the current and future pregnancies.

This review will look at whether planned caesarean or vaginal birth is better for mums of twins and twin babies. Some of the results are shown in this visual summary.

What evidence did we find?
We found 2 studies (randomised trials) involving 2864 women with a twin pregnancy. They compared planned vaginal birth with planned caesarean section.

How good is the evidence?
There were two studies, with lots of women and different countries involved.

The results on long-term outcomes are not available yet.

We can be moderately certain about the results, but we need to study more births to be sure.

The quality of the evidence was moderate for death and health problems in mums and babies, postnatal depression, and breastfeeding.