

Hospital Ratings

Avoiding C-sections

Delivering a baby by C-section when that is not medically necessary poses additional health risks to the mother and the baby. Many hospitals in the U.S. do more C-sections than they should. Our hospital Ratings can help people compare hospitals in their community based on C-section rates. Higher-rated hospitals do fewer C-sections. Lower-rated hospitals do more of them.

We have Ratings for avoiding C-sections for over 1,200 hospitals in almost all states. The Ratings are based on the C-section rates for first-time mothers who anticipate a low-risk delivery – that is, women who don’t deliver prematurely, and are pregnant with a single baby who is properly positioned. The data the Ratings are based on does not include information on factors that may increase the risk of a C-section, such as heart problems in the mother or fetus, pregnancy-related high blood pressure, obesity, or other chronic diseases.

C-section rates among the hospitals we looked at ranged from a low of 9 percent to a high of 68 percent. The average C-section rate was 26 percent, which would earn hospitals our middle Rating. The national target for C-sections is 23.9 percent; 60 percent of hospitals are above this target nationwide.

We rate hospitals with at least 30 low-risk deliveries in either 2014 or the 12-month period ending June 2015. The data come from The Leapfrog Group as well as from the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative, as provided by the California Healthcare Assessment and Reporting Task Force. Hospitals submit data to Leapfrog voluntarily; we estimate that about 55 percent of hospitals did not report their data.

Hospitals that score low on this measure may score well on other measures, such as preventing infections or readmission. Read our article on unnecessary C-sections (www.ConsumerReports.org/csections2016) and our technical report on how we rate hospitals (www.ConsumerReports.org/howweratehospitals).

How to interpret the Ratings:

	Rating	C-section rate (First-Time Mothers, Low-Risk Deliveries)
Better		8.9-18.4
		>18.4-23.9
↓		>23.9-27.0
		>27.0-33.3
		>33.3-68.0
Worse		

For questions about hospitals Ratings, CR's reporting on C-sections, or any consumer topic, please reach out to: Doug Love at Consumer Reports (914-378-2437/DLove@consumer.org).

Chicago Area -- Avoiding C-Sections in first time mothers with low-risk deliveries

C-section rates in the Chicago area ranged from 13.8% to 31.1%.

- Of the 13 hospitals in the Chicago area that publicly reported their data, three hospitals (**Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Roseland Community Hospital, and Saint Anthony Hospital**) received CR's top Rating for avoiding C-sections (●).
- **Northwestern Memorial Hospital**, which reports the highest volume of births in the country, was the only hospital in the U.S. with more than 10,000 annual total births to receive CR's top Rating for avoiding C-sections.
- Five hospitals in the Chicago area (**Presence Resurrection Medical Center, Jackson Park Hospital and Medical Center, University of Chicago Medical Center, Presence Saint Joseph Hospital, and John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County**) received one of CR's lowest Ratings for avoiding C-sections (●).

Hospitals listed by C-section rate

Hospital Name	Avoiding C-Section Rating	C-section rate (First-Time Mothers, Low-Risk Deliveries)
Saint Anthony Hospital	●	13.8
Roseland Community Hospital	●	13.9
Northwestern Memorial Hospital	●	16.7
Norwegian American Hospital	◐	18.5
Mercy Hospital and Medical Center	◐	18.7
Swedish Covenant Hospital	◐	20.7
Presence Saints Mary & Elizabeth Medical Center	◐	22.1
Rush University Medical Center	◑	26.7
Presence Resurrection Medical Center	◒	27.5
Jackson Park Hospital and Medical Center	◒	29.5
University of Chicago Medical Center	◒	29.8
Presence Saint Joseph Hospital	◒	30.9
John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County	◒	31.1