

## For you who have a normal pregnancy - what happens when you reach 41+0 weeks?

Every fifth pregnant person reaches pregnancy week 41+0. Most births start on their own within the next few days. Studies have shown that it can be advantageous to induce labour in week 41 because the risk of the baby dying in the womb is slightly higher if you wait until after week 42+0.

First-time mothers, women aged 40 and over, women with obesity (BMI  $\geq$  30), and women born in sub-Saharan Africa run a slightly increased risk of being affected.

It has not been possible to demonstrate any significant medical disadvantages of inducing labour at the beginning of week 41.

## What are the options?

- If you are at increased risk, you will be offered induction at the beginning of week 41.
- If you are not at increased risk, you will be offered an ultrasound to check whether the baby's growth is normal and that the baby has enough amniotic fluid. If the ultrasound is abnormal, you are offered an assessment at the hospital for a decision on induction.
- Induction is recommended for everyone by week 41+5 at the latest.

## Inducing labour

Induction means that you get help to start labour. Sometimes, labour starts in just a few hours, sometimes it takes several days. It varies greatly, but generally it takes longer for first-time mothers and is quicker for multiple-time mothers. As with all births, you can get help with pain relief to be able to rest and sleep. Depending on how busy the maternity ward is, the time of induction may be postponed for one to two days.

There are different ways to induce labour:

- You may be given drugs if your cervix is immature. The drug causes the cervix to begin to soften and open.
- You may get a soft plastic tube through the vagina into the uterus. The tube is called a balloon catheter and dilates the cervix.
- If the cervix is ripe, the midwife or doctor may pierce the amniotic sac to have the water break. Often, an IV is needed to stimulate the contractions.
- Sometimes, you need to do one of these several times, or use several of the methods.

## Membrane sweep

The chance of naturally inducing labour, without induction, can be increased by something called a membrane sweep. A vaginal exam is done every few days to stretch the edges of your cervix to stimulate cervical ripening.

## Do you have any questions?

You can always contact your midwife if you have any questions.