

## **What if I go past my due date?**

- In healthy, uncomplicated pregnancies, before 41 weeks, the benefits of letting nature take its course and waiting for the baby to come on its own outweigh the risks of inducing labor
- After 42 weeks, there is a small, gradual increase in the risk of stillbirth, which can be devastating. The risks of a large baby, meconium aspiration syndrome (where the baby poops inside the womb and inhales some of this poop), are also increased. Therefore, *Induction of Labor* before 42 weeks is recommended.

## **What is an Induction of Labor?**

- Put simply, an induction brings about labor and birth before your baby has decided to come out on its own.
- An induction involves using medications or other techniques to first help soften and prepare the cervix, and then get the uterus contracting. The goal is to try to mimic nature's own processes in labor as closely as possible by using hormones similar to those your body makes in labor.
- This process, like natural labor, can take several days. You will usually be able to go home between hospital visits the first few days.

## **When will I have my Induction?**

- To balance the risks of inducing too early with the risks of letting the pregnancy go on too long, inductions are recommended for between 41 and 42 weeks.
- The induction process can take a few days so we usually start it at 41 weeks + 3 days (ten days past your due date) to give the baby as long as possible to come out on its own, yet deliver by 42 weeks if possible.
- Because laboring patients require close nursing care, if the maternity unit is busy with other women giving birth, your induction may be bumped to later in the day or the next day. You may still have an assessment to make sure your baby is OK if this happens.

## **What are the risks and downsides to Induction?**

- The best evidence to date suggests that for women who have a reason to be offered induction, there is no increase in C-section rates compared to women who do not have an induction for post-dates pregnancy.
- Known risks include overstimulation of the uterus, bleeding after birth, use of forceps or vacuum for the delivery, and failure to bring about labor.
- If you get to 41 weeks we will have an in-depth discussion about induction of labor.

**What can I do to prevent an Induction?**

- Stay active - keep walking and doing your usual activity. Swimming or pool walking or jogging can feel good at this stage.
- Sometimes sex (if you're up for it) or raspberry leaf tea can help bring on labor
- If you haven't started already, "stretch and sweeps" are recommended

**Is it OK to wait so long after my due date?**

- Sometimes the placenta wears out at the end of pregnancy
- We will confirm that it is OK to wait a little longer by doing the following:
  - Ultrasound to check on baby's growth and amniotic fluid at 41 weeks
  - Non-stress-test at 41 weeks and 41 weeks + 3 days

**My post-dates appointments:**

I will be 40 weeks pregnant on: \_\_\_\_\_

I will be 41 weeks pregnant on: \_\_\_\_\_

Stage of pregnancy	Appointments and Plans
Around 40 weeks	- Regular prenatal appointment at Crocus
	- Consider having a "stretch and sweep" if not yet started
Around 40.5 weeks	- Prenatal visit at Crocus
	- Appointments for NST and Ultrasound at 41 weeks will be arranged
	- Repeat or start "stretch and sweeps"
Around 41 weeks	- Ultrasound
	- NST on maternity unit
	- Appointment at Crocus after these tests to discuss induction of labor and kick counts
	- vaginal exam to check cervix, "stretch and sweep"
Around 41 weeks + 3 days	- Induction of labor
	- NST if induction declined or delayed

**\*for your NSTs and on the day of your planned induction, please remember to call the maternity unit at 867-393-8725 to confirm your appointment time.**