



## Carrying past your due date...

### What you should know.

First of all, you should know that most women do not deliver on their exact due date, in fact, only 5% of women birth their babies on their due date. So, if you carry past your due date, that does not necessarily mean that something is wrong.

Percentages of babies that arrive at different stages of gestation			
Before 37 weeks (Premature)	37-42 weeks (Term)	After 42 weeks (Post term)	After 43 weeks
10%	80%	10%	4%

### What are some dangers to a post term pregnancy?

Your provider may express concerns about a condition called Postmature syndrome. This condition, when it occurs, does indicate a high level of risk for the baby. The symptoms include:

- ☞ Decreased soft tissue mass, particularly subcutaneous fat
- ☞ Peeling skin on the feet and hands
- ☞ Long finger and toenails
- ☞ Increased incidence of passage of Meconium in utero. (This *can* be serious, leading to Meconium induced pneumonia in the baby after birth, but is not necessarily *going* to lead to a problem.)

However, researchers in 1985 found that the symptoms of Postmaturity were not found exclusively in post term babies alone and do not necessarily mean that there is a problem with the baby or that the baby was postmature.

### Will carrying past my due date mean my baby will be too big?



Depends on your definition of too big...many women have successfully birthed babies over 12 lbs, without any tears or assistance! Have faith in your body, and in your baby, to know when to go into labour. Studies have shown that larger babies have a lesser chance of getting “stuck” in the birth canal than smaller babies! And, just because you go past your due date, does **not** mean that your baby will be huge!

### Will my baby die if I carry past 42 weeks?

Carrying a pregnancy past 42 weeks does not mean that your baby will die. A study conducted in Canada in 1994 found that the stillbirth rate was approximately **the same** at 37 weeks (5.1 per thousand) as it was at 43 weeks (5.2 per thousand) of pregnancy! Also, the stillbirth rate was actually **lower** at 42 weeks (2.0 per thousand) of pregnancy than it was at 38 weeks (2.5 per thousand). Also, in this study, more than a quarter of the stillbirths were due to congenital anomalies, not due to being born post dates.

Your provider may monitor you and your baby more closely if you carry past your due date, to check for placental function, amniotic fluid levels, good fetal heart rate, and lots of fetal movement. All of these are indicators of how your baby is doing. This may be done with an ultrasound, Non stress test, or a biophysical profile.