

# Going Past Your Due Date

## Your Due Date

Typically, pregnancy lasts about 40 weeks. Most babies are born between 37 and 42 weeks. It is normal to give birth to your baby 1 week or longer after your due date. Your due date is only an estimate for when your baby is likely to be born, not an exact prediction.

## Going Past Your Due Date

When you go past your due date, your health care provider will closely monitor you and your baby.

Your health care provider may:

- use an electronic fetal monitor to check your baby's heartbeat
- use an ultrasound to measure the amount of amniotic fluid around your baby. (This will also let you see your baby's full body movements)
- check for softening and thinning of your cervix.

## Tips for Coping with Going Past Your Due Date

- **Keep in contact with your health care provider.** You will need to have frequent checkups until your baby is born. Call your health care provider any time you are worried about yourself or your baby's well-being.

- **Get plenty of rest.** It is important to get plenty of rest to build up your energy for labor. Sleep in while you can. If you are having trouble sleeping at night, take naps during the day.
- **Enjoy the extra time.** Use the extra time to address birth announcements or write thank you notes. Finish any last minute details in the nursery. Take some time to pamper yourself.
- **Keep making plans.** You may want to stay close to home. However, you can still make plans to see a movie or go out for dinner.
- **Be cautious about home remedies.** You have probably heard of home remedies that may help start labor. These may cause more harm than good. Talk with your health care provider before trying them or alternative treatments.

## When to Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if:

- you notice a decrease in your baby's activity
- you have any vaginal bleeding
- have a gush or trickle of fluid from your vagina
- you have a temperature higher than 100.4 F
- you have any questions or concerns.