

If you choose induction of labour at 41 weeks	➤	You will have an induction of labour at around 41 weeks of pregnancy
If you choose induction of labour at 41 weeks	➤	Your labour might start naturally
	➤	A problem may develop which means induction of labour becomes advisable
	➤	Your labour may not start naturally and you choose induction of labour later than 41 weeks of pregnancy



When induction happens later than 41 weeks of pregnancy it is less likely to result in a normal birth and more likely to involve complications. For this reason, the information provided in this leaflet compares what happens to women who are induced at 41 weeks with women who continue their pregnancy at this stage (including both those who go into labour naturally and those who do not). Because you do not know when or whether you will go into labour naturally, looking at it this way gives you the most accurate information about your options.

A Normal Vaginal Birth	The baby is born vaginally, head first, and without any help from forceps or a ventouse (a suction cup which goes on the baby's head)
An Assisted Vaginal Birth	This is a birth where help is given to deliver the baby vaginally, using either forceps or a ventouse
A Caesarean Section	This is when the baby is delivered through a cut in the mother's abdomen (tummy).

CHOICES WHEN PREGNANCY REACHES 41 WEEKS

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for women who are near to the due date of their pregnancy and whose pregnancy is 'low risk'. Being low risk means that:

- ☑ You and your baby are healthy and well
- ☑ You are planning to have a normal delivery
- ☑ Your waters have not broken
- ☑ You have not previously had a caesarean delivery @ You are having one baby only, and your baby is in the 'head down' position

What are the options for women whose pregnancy goes over the due date?

Pregnancy normally lasts between 37 and 42 weeks. When a pregnancy goes past the 'due date' (40 weeks of pregnancy) women are given a choice about whether they wish to :

- continue their pregnancy
- have a procedure called induction of labour at around 41 weeks of pregnancy

Only you can decide which choice would be right for you. This leaflet is designed to help you to make that choice by giving you some information about what each option involves, and explaining some of the risks and benefits of each option.

To begin with, the next page explains what the options involve.

Induction of labour at 41 Weeks

Induction is a procedure designed to start off labour so that the baby is born earlier than if the mother waited for labour to start naturally. There are different ways to induce labour. If the neck of the womb (cervix) is closed then drugs

(prostaglandins) are usually used to soften and open it. Once the cervix has opened, the midwife or doctor providing your care will usually ask if they can break the bag of waters around the baby. Often another drug (syntocinon) is needed to make the contractions strong and regular. This drug is given by a drip which goes into a vein in your hand or arm. It often takes 1-2 days from the start of an induction to the birth of the baby although it can be shorter, especially if the cervix is already opened at the start of the induction and the bag of waters around the baby can be broken straight away. Occasionally induction does not start labour off and in these cases a caesarean section is usually offered.

Continuing Pregnancy at 41 Weeks

Continuing pregnancy at 41 weeks means waiting for labour to start naturally. Women who choose this option continue to receive care from the hospital while they are still pregnant. If the pregnancy continues more than 2 weeks after the due date extra visits at the hospital are usually advised to monitor the health of the mother and the baby. Some women who choose this option go into labour naturally and other women who choose this option are induced at a later point in their pregnancy (either because the woman chooses this or because problems develop which mean that induction becomes advisable).

Comparing the Options

When you compare these options it is important to consider that not all women who continue pregnancy at 41 weeks go into labour naturally: some women have an induction at a later point in their pregnancy for the reasons shown below.