

Keep Calm and Wait for Labor!

Don't mess with Mother Nature; Moms and Babies don't like to be rushed!

Your baby needs a full-term pregnancy to grow and develop, and you both benefit from the natural hormones of spontaneous labor! While it may feel tempting to induce labor early, especially during those last few weeks, keep in mind that inducing labor is associated with increased risks, including prematurity, cesarean surgery, hemorrhage, postpartum depression, and infection. Give

yourself the gift of a smoother labor by avoiding an early induction. Once baby is born, you'll enjoy better bonding, attachment, and breastfeeding, with a faster recovery, too!

Labor should only be induced for medical reasons—not for convenience or scheduling concerns. Baby will let you know when they're ready to be born. Until then, here are 40 reasons to go at least the full 40 weeks of pregnancy:

BETTER OUTCOMES WITH SPONTANEOUS LABOR

- 1 Let nature take over**—there are fewer complications and risks for both you and baby when labor starts on its own
- 2 Delight in those kicks and flips**—marvel at the miracle of the life inside
- 3 Birth a brainier baby**—at 35 weeks your baby's brain is only two-thirds the size it will be at term
- 4 Build a love connection**—that brainier baby born full term has had time to build the connections they need for interaction, balance, coordination and learning
- 5 Enjoy the excuse to "eat for two"**—occasionally indulge those cravings without feeling guilty
- 6 Why ruin the surprise?** The excitement of waiting for labor keeps your partner on their toes!
- 7 Make more milk**—your natural hormones help your milk come in sooner and more abundantly when labor starts on its own
- 8 Boost baby's breastfeeding skills**—babies born full term latch more easily and suck and swallow more effectively than babies born earlier

9 Help baby make muscles—they need the whole pregnancy to develop strong jaw and cheek muscles to breastfeed well

10 Give baby's development the benefit of time—especially since you may not know exactly when you got pregnant

11 Let baby pick their birthday—if they decide to make their debut after 37 weeks, there's no need to stop your spontaneous labor

12 Harness your natural hormones—the hormones of spontaneous labor and vaginal birth promote long-term breastfeeding, bonding, and create attachment

13 Labor your way—feel free to eat, drink, and move freely during early labor in the comfort of your own home

14 Lower your stress—laboring at home keeps you in control and lowers your stress and risk for complications

15 Set their thermostat—baby will better regulate their temperature when born at term

16 Slow dance your way through labor—groove your baby down through birth rather than laying strapped in a hospital bed

17 Forget labor pain—don't miss out on the euphoria and amnesia of your body's natural labor hormones just in case your baby wants a little brother or sister

MANAGE YOUR RISKS

- 18 Protect your vulnerable baby**—fewer unnecessary interventions and less stress in labor means better blood flow to your uterus and a healthier baby and birth
- 19 Recover faster and easier from natural labor**—including a shorter hospital stay
- 20 Reduce baby's risks**—jaundice, low blood sugar, and infection—by waiting until baby's ready to emerge
- 21 Maximize those little lungs**—babies born just 2 or more weeks early can have twice the number of complications with breathing
- 22 Ignore people who tell you an induction is more convenient**—nothing is convenient about prolonging labor and increasing your risk of cesarean surgery or NICU admission
- 23 Respond to requests to speed baby's birth with the facts**—inductions often create more painful labors as the hormones of spontaneous labor make it easier to cope with contractions
- 24 Set baby up for success**—babies born early are at greater risk for learning and behavioral issues than those who are born full term
- 25 Help baby begin to breathe**—the hormones of spontaneous labor help clear fluid from baby's lungs so they're less likely to need extra help with those first breaths
- 26 Keep baby by your side**—NICU nurses are happy not to meet you and your baby
- 27 Finish well**—more time in the womb usually means less time in the hospital

ENJOY THIS TIME

- 28 Relax**—babies are usually so much easier to care for in the womb
- 29 Splurge on pedicures**—or ask your partner or a friend to do them for you, especially when you can't reach your feet
- 30 Relish in the fact that right now you're the perfect mom**—your healthy pregnancy habits are growing baby in the best possible way
- 31 Shamelessly wear comfy, stretchy clothes**—delight in your gorgeous, growing baby bump
- 32 Wear your most stylish purses**—especially the ones too small to carry diapers, wipes, and baby gear
- 33 Perfectly parent**—right now you know exactly where baby is and what they're doing at all times
- 34 Sleep while you can**—nighttime parenting is no joke
- 35 Massage remains a must**—ask your partner to help ease the aches and pains
- 36 Prop up your paperback**—your beautiful belly peaks at just the right height for reading books on normal childbirth
- 37 Don't rush it**—create the safest and best birth experience possible
- 38 Go those extra weeks**—that's more time to complete childbirth and breastfeeding classes before you're also caring for baby
- 39 Gather with your girlfriends**—share baby and mommy secrets while they stock your freezer with healthy meals you'll enjoy when you bring baby home
- 40 Write your own healthy reason**—if it gets baby a full 40 weeks of pregnancy it deserves to be on this list!

