

My mommy let me
grow *So Big!*



So, let's test your knowledge.

1. When is a baby considered full term?
 - a. 41-42 weeks
 - b. 39-40 weeks
 - c. 37-38 weeks
 - d. 34-36 weeks
2. When is it safest to have your baby?
 - a. between 34-36 weeks
 - b. between 37-38 weeks
 - c. between 39-40 weeks
 - d. between 41-42 weeks

Here's how we compare:

Alabama has one of the highest rates of infant deaths.

Prematurity is the second leading contributing factor to those deaths.

Preterm births occur before 37 weeks; 16 percent of births in *Alabama* are preterm.

There is also a growing concern for **early term births** – infants born between 37-38 weeks. Babies born between 37-38 weeks make up 30.7 percent of births in *Alabama*.

For more information, go to:
MarchofDimes.com
Health4Mom.org or
alabamapublichealth.gov

Correct Answers: 1. b, 2. c



OFFICE OF
WOMEN'S HEALTH
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC HEALTH

39 Weeks

{timing is everything}

Look inside for some tips on how to have the *healthiest* delivery for you and your baby.



Handprints

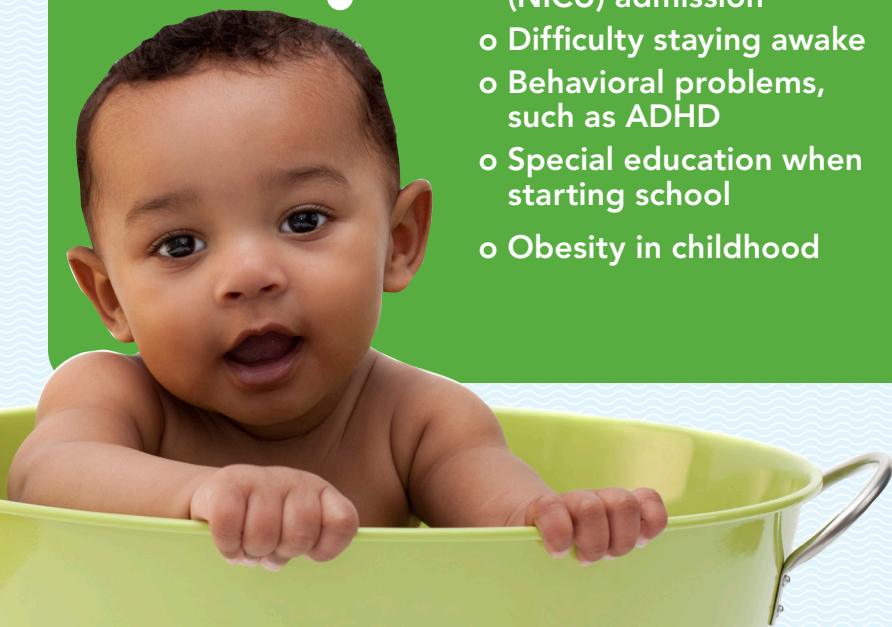
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) "cautions against scheduled deliveries before 39 weeks unless medically necessary."

What's so important about 39 weeks?

Remember, important brain and lung growth occurs later in pregnancy. So, if your baby is not given enough time to mature fully, then he or she can have health problems at birth and later in life. The earlier babies are born, the more health problems and risks they face. Even babies born at 36-38 weeks have a higher risk for health problems than a baby born at 39-40 weeks. These include increased risk for the following:

- o Brain injury
- o Breathing problems
- o Hearing and vision problems
- o Trouble controlling body temperature
- o Feeding and sucking problems
- o Neonatal intensive care (NICU) admission
- o Difficulty staying awake
- o Behavioral problems, such as ADHD
- o Special education when starting school
- o Obesity in childhood

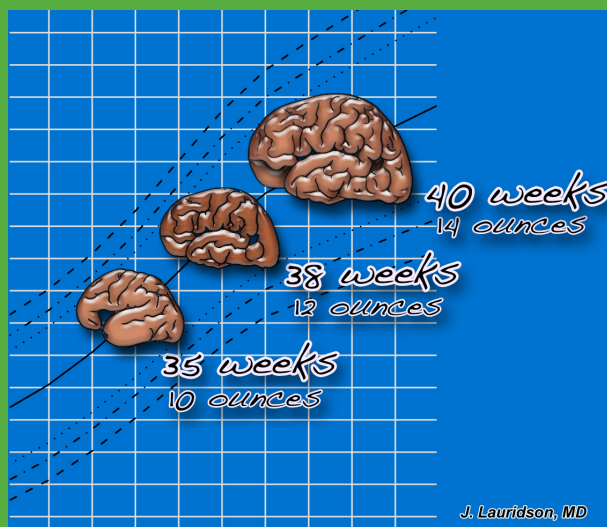
*My mommy let me
choose my birthday!*



What can you do?

The easiest thing you can do is to allow your labor to start naturally. However, if you decide to schedule your delivery, **WAIT** until at least 39 weeks to have your baby. If you have a healthy pregnancy with no medical reasons that make an early delivery necessary, wait until at least 39 weeks to schedule your baby's birth. Also, talk with your doctor about your options.

- o Do I have any conditions that may make me have my baby early?
- o Can I wait until 39 weeks to have my baby?
- o Why might I need to induce my labor or have a c-section?
- o What types of risks are involved in these procedures?



TIMING IS EVERYTHING.

Important fetal brain growth and development occurs during the last weeks of pregnancy. At 39 - 40 weeks a baby's brain weighs 1/3 more than it did at 35 weeks. The last part of the brain to develop is responsible for things like understanding language, vision, hearing, and touch.

THE LAST FEW WEEKS OF PREGNANCY ARE VITAL FOR BRAIN DEVELOPMENT.

March of Dimes recommends waiting until at least 39 weeks to have your baby to allow him or her plenty of time to grow.