

My 36-40 Week Pregnancy

Total Women's Health of Baltimore



Development

Baby fat is a very good thing! Your baby is working hard to produce more fat and is growing rounder and plumper. Those adorable dimples are forming at the elbows and knees. This build-up of fat- about 15% of total body weight- will help the baby to maintain his/her body temperature and give him/her a store of energy. By 37 weeks, the baby is considered full term. Up until this time, he/she has been growing about ½ pound per week, but now growth slows to an ounce or so a week. That's good news for you! The average full-term newborn weighs between 6 and 9 pounds and is 18 to 21 inches long. I (Dr. Oliver) can probably give you an idea of your baby's size at this point. Throughout most of the pregnancy, the baby has relied on your immune system. Over these past few weeks, though, the baby has started to develop its own immune system. This process will continue after birth.

My Body & My Symptoms

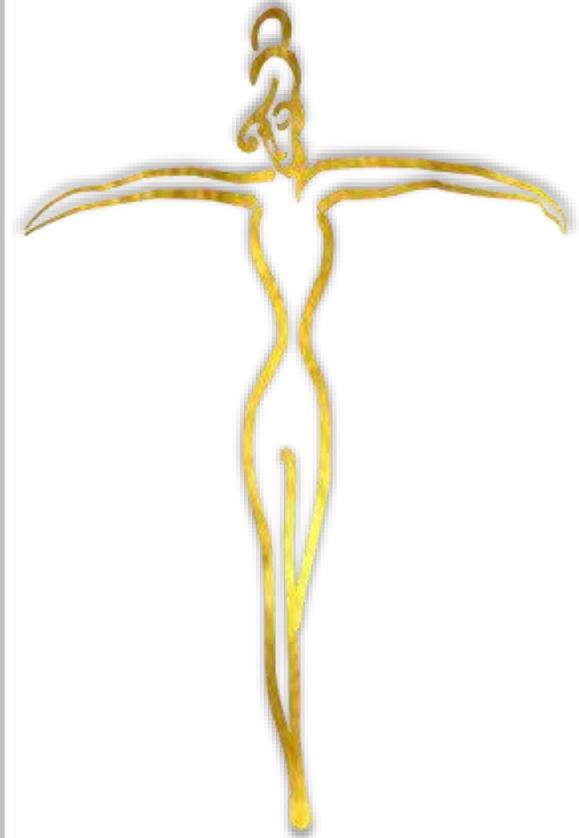
In a first-time mother, the baby often “drops” two to four weeks before delivery, as the baby's head descends into the pelvis. This is called engagement and it means that your body is getting ready for D-day. Studies suggest that the highest rate of engagement in first time moms occurs between 38 and 42 weeks. Sometimes engagement doesn't occur until labor begins. This is more common in women who have previously delivered. Varicose veins may start to pop-up as venous blood flow is decreased due to compression of pelvic vessels by the uterus.

Things To Consider

Breastfeeding helps to promote the development of the baby's immune system after birth. In the first days after birth, your breasts produce “colostrum”, a thin fluid that fortifies the baby's immune system. The breast milk that follows is also chock-full of immunity building benefits.

No one will know the baby's precise size until birth. Unlike in the movies, labor is a long process. If you think your water has broken, call Dr. Oliver at the office for an immediate appointment. Our office will see you immediately if we are open. At night I can be reached on my cell phone (443) 540-1481. If your water hasn't broken and you are having contractions wait until your contractions are consistently 3-5 minutes apart before being seen on labor and delivery. Once again, if the office is open, we will accommodate you.

It is not a crime to go over your due date! Remember, it is just an estimation. I know, by now, you are absolutely over it and tired of being pregnant! However, the natural processes of labor are less painful and much more effective than induction of labor. Induction is usually not performed prior to 39 weeks, due to poor fetal lung development and risk of fetal lung distress. However, there may be maternal or fetal risk factors and medical conditions that outweigh the benefits of staying pregnant. Throughout the pregnancy, I (Dr. Oliver) will communicate any concerns that I may have about the pregnancy with you. After 41-42 weeks and if you have good dating, there is no added benefit to remaining pregnant and the risks start to outweigh the benefits as the placenta ages and is less able to supply nutrients and oxygen to the baby. We will discuss induction options should you need them.



Add your baby's 36-40-week U/S photo here



My To-Do List

- Consider talking to a lactation consultant and buy a breast pump
- If you don't already have one, find a pediatrician for the baby
- Make sure you don't wait too late to have a baby shower (you might be in the hospital Facetiming your guests if you wait too late!)
- Start a birth plan and go over it with Dr. Oliver
- Clean the car out to make room for baby and install car seat

Date of Visit:

Weight:

Memories & Milestones

My biggest fear about labor and delivery:

What I wish people would stop telling me about labor:

I predict I'll go into labor on:

My message to baby :