

It is very important to follow your doctor's advice during pregnancy. Don't forget during these last few weeks to continue to follow his/her advice. Bed rest ordered by your healthcare provider may help you get through the whole nine months of pregnancy and deliver a healthy baby. Other things you can do to stay pregnant are:

- Tell your doctor everything about your health/history
- Eat a healthy diet
- Exercise only if your doctor gives you permission
- Do not use tobacco, alcohol or drugs not prescribed by your doctor
- Avoid things that might cause stress
- Learn about signs of labor and how to manage pain during labor
- Accept the fact that being uncomfortable can be a natural part of pregnancy and labor
- You should not ask for your labor to be induced or a C-section for convenience before your due date



My doctor is: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

TMC Labor and Delivery  
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[www.texomamedicalcenter.net](http://www.texomamedicalcenter.net)

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*Nine months is best*  
**FOR YOUR BABY**



## { Nine months is best }

Pregnancy is different for every woman, and each pregnancy is different, too. It can be exciting and fun, yet a difficult time for a mom-to-be. And as your growing belly becomes more and more uncomfortable near the end of your pregnancy, you may even think you want your baby to come a little early. But those last few weeks of pregnancy are very important to your baby's growth and development. To give your unborn baby the best possible chance at a healthy life, remember that nine months is best. Throughout your pregnancy it is important to take proper care of yourself, get regular prenatal checkups and follow your physician's instructions in order to do the most you can to prevent your baby from being born prematurely.



## Common problems for babies born between 34 and 37 weeks gestation

### Illness and Infection

Premature babies typically have more difficulty fighting infection as efficiently as babies who are born full term. As a baby grows inside the womb, each body system matures at a different rate. Due to the fact that premature babies' systems are not fully developed, they are more likely to return to the hospital for care or require more frequent visits to the pediatrician than a baby born full term.

Most premature babies' skin will appear yellow or jaundiced within the first few days of life. Jaundice is a sign of an illness called hyperbilirubinemia that if left untreated can make the baby very ill. Babies who are being treated for jaundice may require the following:

- A longer hospital stay
- Time spent away from mother
- Additional care at home
- Close follow-up by the pediatrician

### Breathing

Premature babies typically have more difficulty breathing than babies born full term. Since each body system matures at a different rate, the lungs actually complete their maturation later on in the pregnancy and begin to make surfactant. Surfactant is a substance that helps keep the tiny air sacs in the lungs open when exhaling. When there isn't enough of this substance, breathing becomes extremely difficult and premature babies may need assistance breathing. If breathing assistance is required, the baby will need to stay in the nursery and will be unable to visit the mother's room.

One mother whose baby was born prematurely recalls, "To wait five days to hold and cuddle my baby seemed like an eternity. The sense of loss – that something crucial was missing – was overwhelming. My mother wheeled me to the NICU every three hours to give my breast milk. All I could do was sit and look at him, no touching at all. He had tubes everywhere. It was by far the hardest time of my life. The doctor said if I had been able to carry him even one week longer, he could have been a healthy baby and able to breathe on his own."

### Feeding

Premature babies also typically have more difficulty feeding than babies born full term. This is because they may not be able to coordinate sucking, swallowing and breathing at the same time. They may also eat more slowly and more frequently. As a result of these things, a premature baby is more likely to have to stay in the hospital longer than usual. A mother might not be able to feed her premature baby due to the fact that they are more susceptible to illness or may already be sick. They may also have problems with sleeping through much-needed feedings, which is detrimental to the mother establishing her milk supply.

Breast milk is nature's perfect food and provides the following advantages:

- It is more convenient than formula feeding
- It is less expensive than formula feeding
- It is easier for babies to digest
- It protects babies from several childhood illnesses
- It improves babies' development
- It provides an opportunity for mother and baby to bond

### Body Temperature

Even when a baby born prematurely is of average weight, that baby may still have a problem with maintaining their body temperature. Due to this fact, they may need to be kept in an incubator or warmer for the following reasons:

- They have less body fat
- They have less energy
- They burn fat more quickly because they work harder to breathe and eat

