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## Baby due date

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- [Healthy pregnancy](#)
- [Healthy pregnancy - Stages of pregnancy](#)

### Also called

- Pregnancy due date

### Summary

- The unborn baby spends around 38 weeks in the uterus, but the average length of pregnancy, or gestation, is counted at 40 weeks.
- Pregnancy is counted from the first day of the woman's last period, not the date of conception which generally occurs two weeks later.
- Since some women are unsure of the date of their last menstruation (perhaps due to period irregularities), a baby is considered full term if its birth falls between 37 to 42 weeks of its estimated due date.

The unborn baby spends around 37 weeks in the uterus (womb), but the average length of pregnancy, or gestation, is calculated as 40 weeks. This is because pregnancy is counted from the first day of the woman's last period, not the date of conception which generally occurs two weeks later, followed by five to seven days before it settles in the uterus. Since some women are unsure of the date of their last menstruation (perhaps due to period irregularities), a pregnancy is considered full term if birth falls between 37 to 42 weeks of the estimated due date.

A baby born prior to week 37 is considered premature, while a baby that still hasn't been born by week 42 is said to be overdue. In many cases, labour will be induced in the case of an overdue baby.

## Length of gestation

The average length of human gestation is 280 days, or 40 weeks, from the first day of the woman's last menstrual period. The medical term for the due date is estimated date of confinement (EDC). However, only about four per cent of women actually give birth on their EDC. There are many online pregnancy calculators (see [Baby due date calculator](#) that can tell you when your baby is due, if you type in the date of the first day of your last period.

A simple method to calculate the due date is to add seven days to the date of the first day of your last period, then add nine months. For example, if the first day of your last period was 1 February, add seven days (8 February) then add nine months, for a due date of 8 November.

## Determining baby due date

Irregular menstrual cycles can mean that some women aren't sure of when they conceived. Some clues to the length of gestation include:

- Ultrasound examination (especially when performed between six and 12 weeks)
- Size of uterus on vaginal or abdominal examination
- The time fetal movements are first felt (an approximate guide only).

## Pregnancy ultrasound

A pregnancy ultrasound is a non-invasive test that scans the unborn baby and the mother's reproductive organs using high frequency sound waves. The general procedure for a pregnancy ultrasound includes:

- The woman lies on a table.
- A small amount of a clear, conductive jelly is smeared on the woman's abdomen.
- The operator places the small hand-held instrument called a transducer onto the woman's abdomen.
- The transducer is moved across the abdomen. The sound waves bounce off internal structures (including the baby) and are transmitted back to the transducer. The sound waves are then translated into a two-dimensional picture on a monitor. The mother doesn't feel or hear the transmission of the sound waves.
- By measuring the baby's body parts, such as head circumference and the length of long bones, the operator can estimate its gestational age.

### The diagnostic uses of pregnancy ultrasound

Apart from helping to pinpoint the unborn baby's due date, pregnancy ultrasounds are used to diagnose a number of conditions including:

- Multiple fetuses
- Health problems with the baby
- Ectopic pregnancy (the embryo lodges in the fallopian tube instead of the uterus)
- Abnormalities of the placenta such as placenta praevia, where the placenta is positioned over the neck of the womb (cervix)
- The health of the mother's reproductive organs.

## Premature babies

A baby born prior to week 37 is considered premature. The odds of survival depend on the baby's degree of prematurity. The closer to term (estimated date of

confinement, or EDC) the baby is born, the higher its chances of survival - after 34 weeks gestation with good paediatric care almost all babies will survive.

Premature babies are often afflicted by various health problems, caused by immature internal organs. Respiratory difficulties and an increased susceptibility to infection are common.

Often there is no known cause for a premature labour; however, some of the maternal risk factors may include:

- Drinking alcohol or smoking during pregnancy
- Low body weight prior to pregnancy
- Inadequate weight gain during pregnancy
- No prenatal care
- Emotional stress
- Placenta problems such as placenta praevia
- Various diseases such as diabetes and congestive heart failure
- Infections such as syphilis.

## Overdue babies

Around five out of every 100 babies will be overdue, or more than 42 weeks gestation. If you have gone one week past your due date without any signs of impending labour, your doctor will want to closely monitor your condition. Tests include:

- Monitoring the fetal heart rate
- Using a cardiotocograph machine
- Performing ultrasound scans.

The placenta starts to deteriorate after 38 weeks or so, which means an overdue baby may not get enough oxygen. An overdue baby could also grow too large for vaginal delivery. Generally, an overdue baby will be induced once it is two weeks past its expected date. Some of the methods of induction include:

- **Vaginal prostaglandin gel** - to help dilate the cervix
- **Amniotomy** - breaking the waters, sometimes called an artificial rupture of membranes (ARM)
- **Oxytocin** - a synthetic form of this hormone is given intravenously to stimulate uterine contractions.

## Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Your obstetrician
- Midwife or childbirth educator

## Things to remember

- The unborn baby spends around 38 weeks in the uterus, but the average length of pregnancy, or gestation, is counted at 40 weeks.
- Pregnancy is counted from the first day of the woman's last period, not the date of conception which generally occurs two weeks later.
- Since some women are unsure of the date of their last menstruation (perhaps due to period irregularities), a baby is considered full term if its birth falls between 37 to 42 weeks of its estimated due date.

### [References](#)

- *Common concerns and discomforts: overdue baby*, Mother's Bliss, UK. [More information here.](#)
- *Going Overdue*, 2001, Centre for Reproduction and Minimally Invasive Surgery. [More information here.](#)
- *Premmie-L FAQ and advice sheets*, Parents of Premature Babies Inc.(Premie-L). [More information here.](#)
- *Pregnancy: what to expect when it's past your due date*, Family Doctor, USA. [More information here.](#)
- *Ultrasound*, Women Health Information, Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne. [More information here.](#)

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### Healthy pregnancy

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### Pregnancy and birth basics

- [Childbirth - pain relief options](#)

[Understanding your pain relief options can help you cope better with the pain of childbirth...](#)

- [Pregnancy – labour](#)

[Labour is divided into three stages. The first stage is dilation of the cervix from 0 to 10 cm, the second stage is birth of the baby, and the third stage is delivery of the placenta. Labour typically...](#)

- [Pregnancy - premature labour](#)

[Sometimes, babies arrive early. It's important to recognise premature labour, in case you and your baby need medical care...](#)

- [Contraception after giving birth](#)

[After having a baby, you need to choose an effective method of contraception if you don't want to have another baby straight away...](#)

- [If you want to get pregnant, timing is everything](#)

[If you are trying for a baby, to increase your chances of conceiving, it helps to know when you are at your most fertile, and when is the best time to have sex...](#)

- [Pregnancy testing](#)

[Sometimes, a home pregnancy test may be positive when a woman isn't pregnant...](#)

- [Folate for pregnant women](#)

[Even women who aren't planning to have a baby should increase their folate intake in case of unplanned pregnancy...](#)

- [Pregnancy - unplanned](#)

[When a woman does not want to become a parent, her pregnancy options may include abortion or adoption...](#)

- [Contraception - emergency contraception](#)

[It is best to take emergency contraception as soon as possible, ideally within 24 hours of having unprotected sex, but it still works well within 96 hours \(four days\)...](#)

#### **Stages of pregnancy**

- [Baby due date](#)

[Pregnancy is calculated from the first day of your last period, not from the date of conception...](#)

- [Pregnancy - signs and symptoms](#)

[All women experience pregnancy differently, and you will experience different symptoms at different stages of your pregnancy...](#)

- [Planning for labour and birth](#)

[Some of the signs and symptoms of going into labour may include period-like cramps, backache, diarrhoea and contractions...](#)

- [Conceiving a baby](#)

[The odds of a young fertile couple conceiving by having sexual intercourse around the time of ovulation \(the release of the egg from the ovary\) are approximately one in five every month. Around nine...](#)

- [Pregnancy stages and changes](#)

[It's helpful to have an idea of how your body may react to the different stages of pregnancy. It also helps to know how pregnancy may affect your emotions and feelings...](#)

#### **Fertility issues and options**

- [Adoption](#)

[Adoption can give a secure family life to children who can't live with their birth family...](#)

- [Surrogacy](#)

[Surrogacy is a form of assisted reproductive treatment \(ART\) in which a woman carries a child within her uterus on behalf of another person or couple...](#)

- [If you want to get pregnant, timing is everything](#)

[If you are trying for a baby, to increase your chances of conceiving, it helps to know when you are at your most fertile, and when is the best time to have sex...](#)

- [Abortion](#)

[All women should have access to accurate information about abortion so they can make their own informed decisions...](#)

- [Age and fertility](#)

[Age affects the fertility of both men and women, and is the single biggest factor affecting a woman's chance to conceive and have a healthy baby...](#)

- [Infertility in men](#)

[A couple isn't suspected of fertility problems until they have tried and failed to conceive for one year...](#)

- [Infertility in women](#)

[The odds of a young fertile couple conceiving by having sexual intercourse around the time of ovulation are approximately one in five every month...](#)

- [Weight, fertility and pregnancy health](#)

[Compared with women in the healthy weight range, women who are carrying extra weight are less likely to conceive...](#)

### Keeping healthy during pregnancy

- [Pregnancy - morning sickness](#)

[Morning sickness is typically at its worst early in the day but it can strike at any point during the day or night...](#)

- [Postnatal exercise - sample workout](#)

[Make sure your abdominal muscles have healed before you do any vigorous tummy exercises, such as crunches...](#)

- [Healthy eating during pregnancy - tucker talk tips](#)

[Some foods should be avoided during pregnancy as they carry bacteria that could harm your unborn baby...](#)

- [Postnatal exercise](#)

[Always consult with your doctor or midwife before starting any postnatal exercise program...](#)

- [Pregnancy and your mental health](#)

[Finding out you are pregnant can be a very exciting time. But it can also make you feel uncomfortable, unwell, worried and make you wonder how you are going to cope. And it doesn't stop when the baby...](#)

- [Pregnancy and teeth](#)

[It's important to look after your teeth and gums when you're pregnant, as gum disease can affect your baby...](#)

- [Tests, scans and checks - pregnancy and labour](#)

[Tests can confirm your pregnancy and also monitor your baby's development in the womb...](#)

- [Alcohol and pregnancy](#)

[There's no safe level of alcohol use during pregnancy. It's safest to not drink at all during pregnancy, when trying to conceive, and while breastfeeding...](#)

- [Pregnancy and smoking](#)

[Smoking while pregnant exposes a woman and her unborn child to an increased risk of health problems...](#)

- [Immunisation and pregnancy](#)

[Immunisation can protect a woman and her unborn baby against many infectious diseases...](#)

- [Folate for pregnant women](#)

[Even women who aren't planning to have a baby should increase their folate intake in case of unplanned pregnancy...](#)

- [Pregnancy and exercise](#)

[Unless you have complications, you should be able to exercise throughout your pregnancy...](#)

- [Pelvic floor](#)

[Pelvic floor exercises are designed to improve muscle tone and prevent the need for corrective surgery...](#)

- [Pregnancy and diet](#)

[Good nutrition during pregnancy can help to keep you and your developing baby healthy...](#)

- [Pregnancy and travel](#)

[Travelling to developing nations is not encouraged during pregnancy, due to the risk of disease and the standard of medical facilities...](#)

### Health concerns during pregnancy

- [Miscarriage and Stillbirth - Coming to terms \(video\)](#)

- [Pregnancy - bleeding problems](#)

[Bleeding from the vagina in early pregnancy happens in almost one in four pregnancies...](#)

- [Newborn bloodspot screening \(video\)](#)

[Every newborn baby in Australia is offered a newborn bloodspot screening test to identify those at risk for rare, but serious, medical conditions including PKU, hypothyroidism and cystic fibrosis...](#)

- [Placenta previa](#)

[Placenta previa means the placenta has implanted at the bottom of the uterus, over the cervix or close by...](#)

- [Placental abruption](#)

[Placental abruption means the placenta has detached from the wall of the uterus, starving the baby of oxygen and nutrients...](#)

- [Pregnancy - pre-eclampsia](#)

[There is no evidence that pre-eclampsia is caused by emotional stress, working too hard or not getting enough rest...](#)

- [Lupus and pregnancy](#)

[Lupus can be controlled with medications, so the majority of affected women are able to have children...](#)

- [HIV and women – having children](#)

[Women living with human immunodeficiency virus \(HIV\), or women whose partner is HIV-positive, may wish to have children but feel concerned about the risk of transmission of the virus to themselves \(if...](#)

- [Alcohol and pregnancy](#)

[There's no safe level of alcohol use during pregnancy. It's safest to not drink at all during pregnancy, when trying to conceive, and while breastfeeding...](#)

- [Pregnancy and smoking](#)

[Smoking while pregnant exposes a woman and her unborn child to an increased risk of health problems...](#)

- [Pregnancy - obstetric emergencies](#)

[An obstetric emergency may arise when a woman is pregnant, or during her delivery. In this case, extra care is needed. A woman may need a lot of tests and treatments, and extended hospital stays. She...](#)

- [Postnatal depression \(PND\)](#)

[Postnatal depression can happen either a few days or weeks after the birth, with a slow or sudden onset...](#)

- [Molar pregnancy](#)

[Most molar pregnancies are diagnosed when bleeding early in pregnancy prompts an ultrasound scan...](#)

- [Miscarriage](#)

[A range of feelings is normal after a miscarriage, and they often linger for some time...](#)

- [Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder \(FASD\)](#)

[The World Health Organization recommends that pregnant women should avoid alcohol...](#)

- [Asthma - pregnancy and breastfeeding](#)

[Pregnant women with asthma need to continue to take their asthma medication as it is important to the health of both mother and baby that the mother's asthma is well managed...](#)

- [Pregnancy and diet](#)

[Good nutrition during pregnancy can help to keep you and your developing baby healthy...](#)

- [Birth defects explained](#)

[The cause of birth defects is often unknown, speak to your GP if you are at increased risk of having a baby with a congenital anomaly...](#)

- [Ectopic pregnancy](#)

[Ectopic pregnancy is caused by a fertilised egg not being able to move through the fallopian tube...](#)

- [Diabetes - gestational](#)

[Gestational diabetes is diabetes that occurs during pregnancy and usually disappears when the pregnancy is over...](#)

## Preparing for birth

- [Pregnancy - care choices](#)

[It's very important for you and your baby to be looked after from the start of your pregnancy until after the birth of your baby...](#)



- [Pregnancy – labour](#)

[Labour is divided into three stages. The first stage is dilation of the cervix from 0 to 10 cm, the second stage is birth of the baby, and the third stage is delivery of the placenta. Labour typically...](#)

- [Pregnancy - premature labour](#)

[Sometimes, babies arrive early. It's important to recognise premature labour, in case you and your baby need medical care...](#)

- [Pregnancy - packing for hospital](#)

[Packing for hospital is an exciting part of preparing for the birth of your baby...](#)

- [Planning for labour and birth](#)

[Some of the signs and symptoms of going into labour may include period-like cramps, backache, diarrhoea and contractions...](#)

- [Twins - identical and fraternal](#)

[Multiple births are more common due to the advancing average age of mothers and the rise in assisted reproductive techniques...](#)

### Preparing for a newborn

- [Breastfeeding - the first days](#)

[Let your baby feed as much as they want in the first few days to help establish good breastfeeding patterns...](#)

- [Breastfeeding - when to start](#)

[Breastfeeding within the first hour after birth allows your baby to behave instinctively and breastfeed with little intervention...](#)

- [Alcohol and pregnancy](#)

[There's no safe level of alcohol use during pregnancy. It's safest to not drink at all during pregnancy, when trying to conceive, and while breastfeeding...](#)

- [Vitamin K and newborn babies](#)

[With low levels of vitamin K, some babies can have severe bleeding into the brain, causing significant brain damage...](#)

- [Postnatal depression \(PND\)](#)

[Postnatal depression can happen either a few days or weeks after the birth, with a slow or sudden onset...](#)

- [Baby furniture - safety tips](#)

[Even if your baby furniture meets every safety standard and recommendation, your child still needs close supervision...](#)

- [Newborn bloodspot screening](#)

[Every newborn baby in Australia is offered a newborn bloodspot screening test to identify those at risk of rare, but serious, medical conditions...](#)

### Related Information

- [Pregnancy - week by week](#)

[Pregnancy is counted as 40 weeks, starting from the first day of the mother's last menstrual period...](#)

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[All women experience pregnancy differently, and you will experience different symptoms at different stages of your pregnancy...](#)

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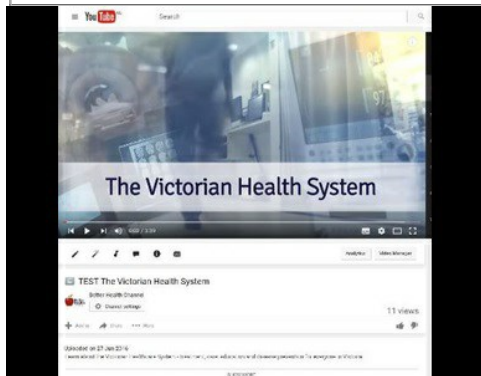
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