

## Giving Birth After Your Due Date

### Post-Dates Assessment (PDA)

You will likely feel excited and anxious as you wait for the birth of your baby. The average length of pregnancy is 40 weeks. Most women give birth between 38 to 42 weeks. Many babies are not born on their due date. About 85% of babies are born within one week before or after their due date. It's best to think of your due date as a "best guess."

It's a good idea to pay more attention to your baby's movements near the end of your pregnancy. A baby should move 6 times or more in 2 hours. **If you do not feel these movements, call the Labour and Delivery Unit at 902-679-2657 ext. 3052 or 3050.** They may ask you to come for fetal monitoring to check your baby's movements.

### What is Post-Dates Delivery?

As you come close to 40 weeks of pregnancy, your doctor may talk about delivery after your due date. This is called **post-dates delivery** and is safe for most babies. You will need to keep a close eye on your baby and be flexible about your delivery plan.

### What is a Post-Dates Assessment (PDA)?

A PDA happens if you have not given birth by your due date. Your doctor will check you to make sure everything is OK, and talk with you about what will happen next. Your doctor will arrange for you to visit the Labour and Delivery Unit at Valley Regional Hospital to have a PDA one week past your due date.

### What will happen during my PDA?

Come to the Labour and Delivery Unit and check in with the clerk. Next, you will meet one of the labour and delivery nurses.

- The nurse will ask about your pregnancy, baby's movements, and general health history.
- The nurse will monitor your temperature, blood pressure, pulse, contractions, and baby's heart rate.
- You may have a vaginal (internal) exam. This will help us to decide the best way to induce (start) your labour, if needed. The nurse will talk with you about the different ways to induce labour.
- You may be asked for a urine (pee) sample.
- We will start to make plans for your induction of labour, this will include booking an appointment for your second PDA. A second PDA is scheduled if you go ten days past your due date.

We encourage you to ask questions and talk about any concerns you may have during your PDA.

## What will happen during my second PDA?

The nurse and doctor will talk with you about your induction of labour and your delivery plan. If your cervix (place where your baby leaves your uterus) is **not ready** for labour, we will talk with you about ways to get it ready. These include:

- › using medication in the vagina (vaginal insert or gel)
- › placing a balloon catheter through the opening of the cervix
- › taking a pill by mouth

If your cervix is **ready** for labour, the ways to induce labour include:

- › intravenous (IV) medication (oxytocin, sometimes called the “drip”)
- › breaking your water

## How do I get ready for my PDA(s)?

- You may eat breakfast before your appointment. If you need to stay at the hospital for a long time, we will make arrangements for your meal(s).
- Please bring your Nova Scotia health card with you.
- Most times you will return home after your PDA, but there may be circumstances where you will be asked to stay. This will be decided with your health care provider before your assessment.

As we are planning for your birth, there may be times where it is necessary to delay starting your induction to make sure you and your baby are given the best possible care.

**First Post-Dates Assessment:** \_\_\_\_\_ (date) at \_\_\_\_\_ (time)

If you have any questions, please call the Labour and Delivery Unit at the Valley Regional Hospital at 902-679-2657 ext. 3052 or 3050.

### Call the Labour and Delivery Unit right away if:

- › you have any bleeding
- › your water breaks
- › you have a headache or see spots in front of your eyes
- › your baby stops moving as much
- › you think you are in labour, or feel unwell
- › you have any other concerns about your pregnancy