

HEALTH MATTERS

For Your Health



Delivering After Your Due Date

BY DR. RICHARD N. WALDMAN

The due date is one of the most important dates on an expectant mother's calendar. It gives women an idea of when their babies will come and a timeline to prepare for the arrival. But as many mothers can tell you, the due date is an estimate, not a definite, and can be hard to predict.

Doctors calculate your due date by determining the first day of your last menstrual period and adding 280 days (40 weeks)—the length of an average pregnancy—to that date. The due date is usually set early on in pregnancy and an ultrasound exam may be used to help confirm the gestational age of the fetus. However, only five percent of babies are born on their due date, with many women giving birth as much as three weeks before or two weeks later.

If a woman has not delivered at or after the 42nd week, the pregnancy is considered post-term. Roughly 10 percent of pregnancies are post-term, which can up the chance of health problems for the woman and her fetus. The placenta may not function as well as it did earlier in the pregnancy, the umbilical cord may become pinched, and the amount of amniotic fluid in the amniotic sac may begin to decrease. The risk of cesarean delivery also doubles in women who are beyond their due date. Despite these risks, most babies born late are healthy.

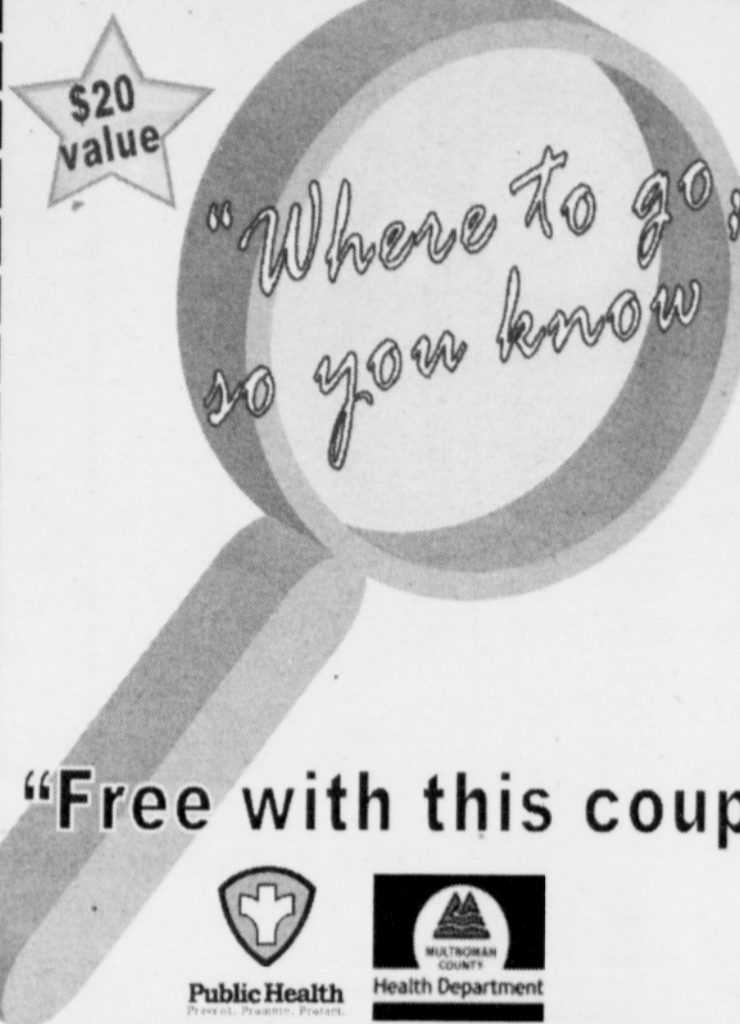
So what can you expect after your due date passes? After 41–42 weeks of pregnancy, your doctor may perform tests to monitor the fetus's health—such as fetal heart rate testing, ultrasound evaluation of amniotic fluid volume, or a biophysical profile—several times each week. You may also be instructed to count and record the number of kicks your baby makes in a given amount of time or at certain times during the day. Your doctor may use medications that contain prostaglandins or devices or substances designed to quicken cervical ripening—a softening, thinning, and opening of the cervix—that gets the body ready for labor.

If you don't start labor on your own by 41–42 weeks, several common techniques may be used to induce it. Your doctor can sweep a gloved finger over the thin membrane that connects the amniotic sac to the uterus ("stripping the membrane"), or may break your water by making a hole in your amniotic sac. You may be given misoprostol or oxytocin to stimulate or intensify contractions. In some instances, cesarean delivery may be necessary if a woman's labor still does not progress.

For more information, the patient education pamphlet "What to Expect After Your Due Date" is available at acog.org/publications.

Dr. Richard N. Waldman is president of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

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Call 503.988.3775 for an appt.

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Portland, 97204

Northeast Health Center

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5329 NE MLK Jr. Blvd, 2nd Floor,
Portland, 97211

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Se habla español: other interpretation by appointment.



Dr. Billy R. Flowers (above center) and his skilled staff are ready to help those in need.

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Part 13. Shoulder Pain: Why many people cannot, and should not, take it lying down.

Q: My shoulders hurt so bad at times, I can hardly sleep. What can Chiropractic do for me that no one else has been able to?

A: Shoulder pain is without question, one of the most debilitating types of pain we encounter. Because the shoulder is so intricately related to the spine, virtually any movement can be excruciating. It is not at all uncommon to see cases like yours where patients' hurt so bad, they cannot even get a decent night's sleep. To Complicate matters, many patients go from doctor to doctor seeking relief, being told they have

bursitis at one office, tenosynovitis at another and so on until they return home confused, frustrated and still in agony. As Chiropractors, we are concerned about nerve flow to the various parts of the body. Of course, we look to see if a bursal sac has been traumatized or if a tendon has been injured. But more importantly, we look to see what caused the injury. You see,

the cause was there long before the pain itself. By treating the cause, we not only relieve the pain, don't suffer through another sleepless night. Call for an appointment to find out how Chiropractic can eliminate the cause of the problem once and for all. Or feel free to call us if you have any questions whatsoever about your health.

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