

# Factsheet - Induction of labour for maternal age 40+

## At a glance

If you are 40 or older, research shows that continuing pregnancy beyond 39 weeks can increase the chance of complications, including stillbirth and low birth weight. Induction of labour is offered to help reduce this.

## Your choices

- ✓ Accept induction or plan caesarean birth between 39–40 weeks.
- ✓ Decline induction or caesarean and choose extra monitoring.
- 💬 Talk through other options with your midwife or obstetrician.

## Did you know?

*These figures are based on UK and international research; individual risk may vary*

Risk Factor	Women Aged 35–39	Women Aged 40+
Stillbirth (at 39 weeks)	1.5 per 1,000 (0.15%) births	2 per 1,000 (0.2%) births
Stillbirth (at 40 weeks)	3 per 1,000 (0.3%) births	4–5 per 1,000 (0.4–0.5%) births
Stillbirth (at 41 weeks)	7.9 per 1,000 (0.79%) births	12.8 per 1,000 (1.28%) births
Hypertensive Disorders	8 per 100 (8–10%) chance	12–15 per 100 (12–15%) chance
Gestational Diabetes	7–10 per 100 (7–10%) chance	15–20 per 100 (15–20%) chance
Placental Issues	Moderate chance – No published figures	More common due to placental ageing – No published figures
Preterm Birth / Low Birth Weight	8–10 per 100 (8–10%) chance	12–15 per 100 (12–15%) chance

## What Happens if you decide not to be induced?

**If your preference deviates from recommended care, you will be offered an appointment to discuss this further with your obstetrician who will discuss your options and any extra support and monitoring you will need.**

### Need Help or Have Questions?

**Speak to your midwife or call Triage: 01772 524495**

Here's a practical BRAIN Decision Tool. It's designed to help clarify thought processes and support informed choices:

### How to use it:

Write down your thoughts under each heading.

Discuss them with your midwife or healthcare team.

Use this as a guide, not a rule - your choice matters.

Some examples have been added to the table to help you get started.

**B - What are the potential benefits of induction for me and my baby?**

*Examples:*

*Reduces chance of stillbirth after 39 weeks.*

*Planned timing for birth.*

*May lower risk of complications linked to ageing placenta.*

**R – What are the possible risks or downsides?**

*Examples:*

*Longer labour process.*

*Increased chance of interventions (e.g., assisted birth).*

*Possible discomfort from induction methods.*

*Longer stay in hospital*

**A – What other alternatives do I have?**

**I – What does my intuition tell me?**

**N – What happens if I do nothing right now?**

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**Division:** Women and Children

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