

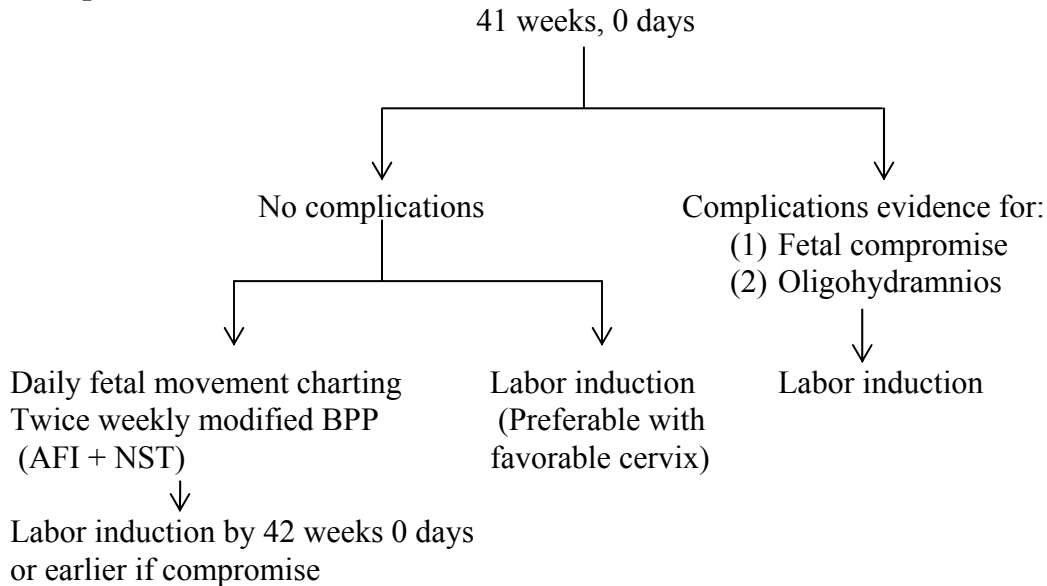
PROTOCOL #9 - Maternal Fetal Medicine, University of New Mexico

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF POSTTERM PATIENTS

Definitions

A prolonged pregnancy is defined as going beyond the due date. A postterm pregnancy is defined as having completed 42 weeks.

Antenatal Options



- A policy of labor induction after 41 weeks 0 days compared with awaiting spontaneous labor for at least one week is associated with fewer perinatal deaths. However, the absolute risk is extremely small.
- For those who do not deliver with the first induction, a second induction can be performed within three days.
- Women classified as having *uncertain* dating of prolonged pregnancies are managed with at least weekly nonstress fetal testing and assessment of amniotic fluid volume. Women with an AFI ≤ 5 cm or with reports of diminished fetal movement should undergo a labor induction.
- Compared with delivery at 40 weeks' gestation, delivery at 37 or 38 weeks or at 42 weeks or later was associated with an increased risk of CP.

Intrapartum Care

- Women whose pregnancies are known or suspected to be prolonged should come to the hospital as soon as they suspect labor.
- We recommend that fetal heart rate and uterine contractions be monitored electronically for variations consistent with fetal compromise.
- Amniotomy with placement of a scalp electrode and intrauterine pressure catheter provide more precise data concerning fetal heart rate and uterine contractions.
- Amnioinfusion does not prevent meconium aspiration; however, it remains a reasonable approach for interpreting repetitive variable decelerations, regardless of meconium status.
- The likelihood of a successful vaginal delivery is reduced appreciably for nulliparous woman who is in early labor with thick, meconium-stained amniotic fluid.
- Suctioning of the infant's pharynx at delivery of the head does not reduce the likelihood of meconium aspiration.

CONSULTATION: Twenty-four hour consultation is available by calling the Maternal Fetal Medicine service at the University of New Mexico Hospital. 1-888-866-7257.

SUGGETED READINGS:

1. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: Management of postterm pregnancy. Practice Bulletin No. 55, September 2004.
2. Gulmezoglu AM, Crowther CA, Middleton P. Induction of labor for improving birth outcomes for women at or beyond term. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2006, Issue 4. Art. No: CD004945. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD004945.pub2
3. Moster D, Wilcox A, Vollset SE, Markestad T, Terje Lie R. Cerebral Palsy among term and postterm births. JAMA. 2010;304(9):976-982