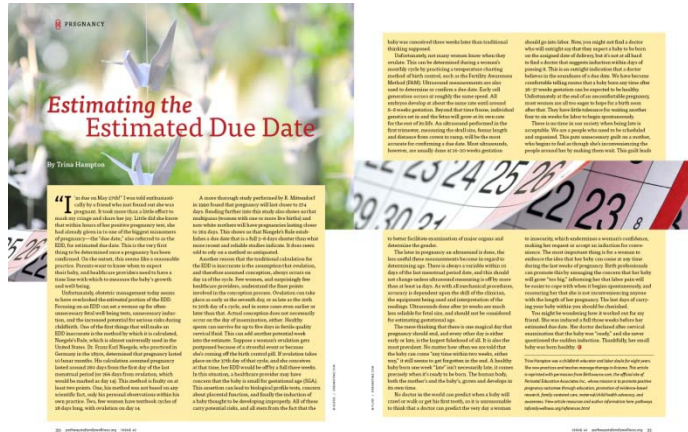


## Estimating the Estimated Due Date

Pregnancy – Trina Hampton  
Pathways #43, page 20



### Talking Points

- ❖ One of the biggest misnomers of pregnancy – the “due date” or the EDD for ESTIMATED due date. It’s important that we remember that we don’t over look the estimated part.
- ❖ It’s important for women to not focus on the EDD, think of it as a “due month”.
- ❖ There are different methods used to calculate the EDD. You decide the accuracy for yourself:
  - Naegele’s Rule, almost universally used in the US, assumes that pregnancy lasts around 280 days (10 lunar months) from the first day of the last menstrual period (or 266 days from ovulation, which would be marked as day 14).
    - This method is not based on any scientific fact, only personal observations
    - Many women don’t have textbook cycles of 28 days with ovulation on day 14
  - A study by R. Mittendorf found that pregnancy lasted closer to 274 days (from conception, not from the first day of the last menstrual period) for first time moms. For moms who have had one or more live births and non-white mothers will have pregnancies lasting closer to 269 days. These findings are about a week longer than Naegele’s Rule. (Anyone have their baby “late?”)
- ❖ Ovulation, and therefore conception, doesn’t always occur on 14 of the cycle. Ovulation can take place as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> day or as late as the 20<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> day of a cycle (and sometimes even earlier or later than that).
- ❖ Conception doesn’t always occur on the day of insemination, either. Healthy sperm can live up to 5 days in fertile quality cervical fluid. (This can potentially add an addition week into the estimate.)
- ❖ Trina Hampton gives us this possible scenario: “Suppose a woman’s ovulation gets postponed because of a stressful event or because she’s coming off the birth control pill. If ovulation takes place on the 37th day of that cycle, and she conceives at that time, her EDD would be off by a full three weeks. In this situation, a healthcare provider may have concern that the baby is small

for gestational age (SGA). This assertion can lead to biological profile tests, concern about placental function, and finally the induction of a baby thought to be developing improperly. All of these carry potential risks, and all stem from the fact that the baby was conceived three weeks later than traditional thinking supposed.” (20)

- ❖ Ultrasounds used for dating used later in pregnancy are not accurate. Babies grow at different rates after about 6-8 weeks gestation. Accuracy is also dependent on the skill of the clinician and the equipment being used. (Please make an informed choice when choosing to get an ultrasound.)
- ❖ “The human body, both the mother’s and the baby’s, grows and develops in its own time.” (21) Babies come precisely when they are ready to be born.
- ❖ If it’s impossible for a doctor to accurately predict when a baby will get its first tooth or crawl how are they supposed to accurately predict when your child will be born? Now, finding a doctor that will outright say that they expect the baby to be born on a certain day is unlikely, finding a doctor that suggests induction within days of passing it is not uncommon. What do you think; do they believe in the “due date”?
- ❖ Being pregnant is not a time to fall into our society’s idea that it is unacceptable to be late. Babies can come at any time during the last weeks of pregnancy.

Read previous article “Risks of Induced Labor” to inform yourself on the risk of inductions.

### Resources

Full references for each article are available at <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html>

"Labor Induction: The Low Down on Natural Approaches from a Midwife-MD" by Aviva Romm, M.D.  
<http://avivaromm.com/labor-induction-low-natural-approaches-midwife-md>

Kelly Brogan, MD’s article “Perils of Peeking into the Womb: Ultrasound Risks”  
<http://kellybroganmd.com/article/ultrasound-risks-perils-of-peeking-into-the-womb/>

"The Due Date" by Henci Goer and Ann Frye <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Pregnancy-Birth/the-due-date.html>