Congratulations on the upcoming birth of your baby!
This is an exciting time. It is also, for many women, a time of questions. One of the most common questions asked by expectant mothers is, “When will my baby be born?”
Discuss the information in this handout with your healthcare provider. Together, the two of you can make the best decision for a positive birth experience for you and your baby.

WHAT IS A SCHEDULED DELIVERY?
A scheduled delivery is when you and your doctor pick the day on which you will be delivered, either by cesarean delivery or by inducing your labor. Most of the time a delivery is scheduled because of the medical/obstetrical needs of the mother or the baby.

What you should know prior to your scheduled delivery

The Risk of Having a Delivery Too Early
Inductions/scheduled cesarean sections may contribute to the growing number of babies who are born “near term,” between 36 and 38 weeks gestation. While babies born at this time are usually considered healthy, they are more likely to have medical problems than babies born at full term (39-40 weeks).
A baby’s lungs and brain mature and continue to grow late into the pregnancy. Compared to a full-term baby, an infant born between 36 and 38 weeks gestation is:
  o 2 to 3 times more likely to be admitted to an intensive care unit. This will mean a longer and more difficult hospital stay for your baby. It may also make it harder for the two of you to breastfeed or bond.
  o More likely to have trouble breathing and need to be connected to a breathing machine (ventilator) to help her breathe.
  o More likely to have trouble maintaining body temperature and need to spend time in a warming area (incubator) to keep her body temperature stable.

Your Due Date
It can be hard to pinpoint the date your baby was conceived. Being off by just a week or two can result in premature birth. When you became pregnant, your healthcare provider gave you an estimated due date for your baby. This is the date that your baby is expected to be full-term (40 weeks) and ready to make an entrance into the world. Your due date is based on several factors:
  o Information about your last menstrual period
  o Results from various lab tests
  o The size of your baby based on an ultrasound performed in the first half of pregnancy
When is it okay to have a scheduled delivery?
Your healthcare provider uses established guidelines to make a safe decision about whether or not a scheduled delivery is right for you and your baby. If you don’t meet these guidelines, your healthcare provider may recommend waiting for labor to help time your delivery.

Before scheduling a delivery:
- You should understand the medical reason that you or your baby needs to be delivered early
- If there is no medical reason for you to be delivered early
  - Your healthcare provider must be very certain of your due date
  - You must be at least 39 weeks along in your pregnancy OR
  - Have had an amniocentesis to see if the baby’s lungs are ready to breathe outside the uterus

The Bottom Line
A scheduled delivery is sometimes needed to protect the health of the mother, the baby, or both. But it also has risks. The pregnant woman needs to understand both the benefits and risks. These questions may be useful when you talk to your provider:

It maybe necessary for your provider to recommend a scheduled delivery before 39 weeks, ask:
Is there a problem with my health or the health of my baby that may make me need to have my baby early?
Can I wait to have my baby closer to 40 weeks?

Ask about induction:
Why do you need to induce my labor?
How will you induce my labor?

Ask about cesarean section delivery:
Why do I need to have my baby by cesarean?
What are the risks of a cesarean delivery compared to a vaginal delivery?

Additional Important Information:

IMMUNIZATION & PREGNANCY
Speak to your healthcare provider regarding immunizations. Vaccines help keep a pregnant woman and her growing family healthy.

BREASTFEEDING
If your baby is born before 39 completed weeks, your baby will benefit from breast milk. The American Academy of Pediatrics says that breast milk is best for all babies for the first year.