



Having a baby over the age of 40

This leaflet is to provide you with information if you are having a baby or thinking of having a baby and are 40 years of age or over.

Introduction

Many women or birthing people chose to have a baby after the age of 40 and most will have healthy pregnancies. For some, however, as with having a baby at any age, there can be complications in pregnancy and childbirth. Some complications are more likely to develop or pre-exist if you are aged 40 or older when you conceive, including developing high blood pressure or diabetes in pregnancy, or placental or birth problems.

If you are 40 or older at the time of falling pregnant, your midwife will recommend hospital referral for you to have consultant-led care where you will have the chance to talk about what this will mean for you and your baby. You will also be recommended to take 150mg aspirin (if you are able to) in the evening from 12 to 36 weeks to reduce the risk of developing high blood pressure and reduce the chance of placental issues which may affect your babies growth. You will also have additional growth scans either from 28 or 32 weeks depending on individual circumstances.

Common problems if you are over 40 and what we offer to reduce the chance of complications

There are some common complications that are more likely to happen if you are over 40. It is worth knowing about these and being aware of the things to look out for. These include:

- Gestational diabetes – so you will be offered a test to check for this.
- Developing high blood pressure – you should have more regular monitoring of your blood pressure and urine in the last few weeks of pregnancy for all women.
- Developing blood clots in legs and lungs – you may be recommended to use blood thinning injections either during or after your pregnancy based on individual circumstances.
- Having a larger baby (which can be linked to having gestational diabetes) or smaller baby – this will be monitored during your additional growth scans.
- Needing a Caesarean birth – either due to complications or because, in some women or birthing people, the uterine muscle is less effective as we age.
- Having a stillbirth after 40 weeks – so it is important to monitor your baby's movement and discuss the possibility of an induction with your midwife or obstetrician. You will be offered induction of labour from 38 weeks depending on individualised care which you can discuss further with your obstetrician or midwife.
- Chromosomal abnormalities – but screening is offered to everyone regardless of age.

You can find more information about these complications on the RBH Maternity pages at <https://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/services-and-departments/maternity>.

You will be able to talk about these recommendations or any concerns you may have with your midwife and obstetrician.

The link below provides further information and includes recommendations for pregnancy and childbirth - <https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/ask-a-midwife/what-happens-if-im-pregnant-over-age-40>.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Maternity, Ms B Chohan, Consultant O&G

Reviewed: December 2025

Next review due: December 2027

Our Maternity Strategy and Vision

'Working together with women, birthing people and families to offer compassionate, supportive care and informed choice; striving for equity and excellence in our maternity service.'

You can read our maternity strategy here

