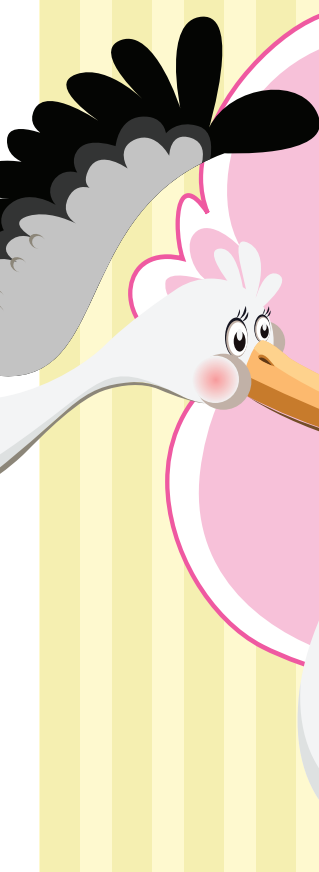


Early Elective Deliveries



Full-term babies are the healthiest babies.

In upstate New York, **2/3** of all babies born in 2013 were full term, which means they were born at a gestational age of at least 39 weeks.



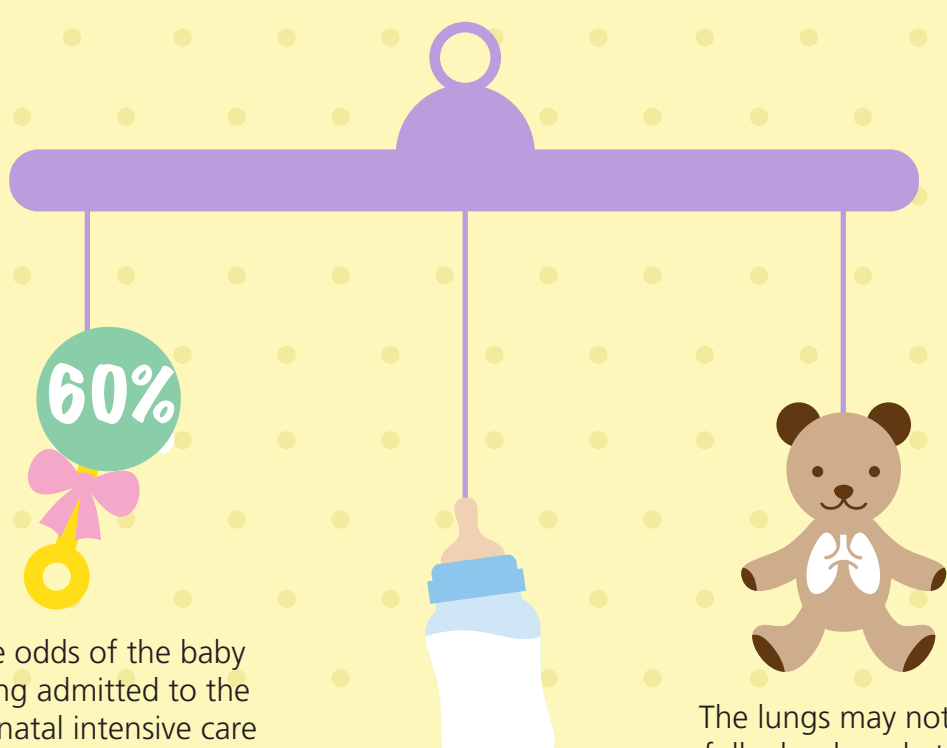
Percent of babies born in upstate New York by gestational age



Some babies need to be delivered early because the mother or baby is at risk for complications. If there are no complications, inducing labor or scheduling a C-section before 39 weeks should be avoided because the baby is still growing.

A baby's brain will grow almost a third of its total weight between weeks 35 and 39

Although babies born between 37 weeks and 41 weeks are considered **term**, there are significant differences in health outcomes between babies born **early term** at 37 weeks and 38 weeks and those born **full term** at 39 weeks to 41 weeks:



The odds of the baby being admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit are more than 60 percent higher in early term babies than full-term babies.

During weeks 37 and 38, the baby may still be developing the ability to swallow and suck. Babies born at this time are at higher risk of having feeding problems.

The lungs may not be fully developed at 37 weeks and 38 weeks. The odds of an early term baby needing respiratory support are almost double that of a full-term baby.



Some of these babies were delivered by cesarean section, which puts them at an even higher risk for having respiratory problems and being admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit. In New York state, 35.4 percent of early term babies were born by cesarean section in 2013.

Leading medical societies participating in Choosing Wisely, an initiative of the ABIM Foundation, state that: "Most babies need 39 weeks to develop fully. Induced or planned delivery before that time – without valid medical reason – is not in the best interest of the baby or the mother."

If you are expecting, talk to your doctor about what's best for you and your baby. Visit <http://consumerhealthchoices.org/choosing-wisely-report/delivering-baby/> for information about Choosing Wisely from Consumer Reports.

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