

Study redefines the 'optimal time for delivery'

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Using data from the National Center for Health Statistics, Alicia Mandujano, M.D., of the MetroHealth Medical Center/Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, and colleagues examined the optimal gestational age for [delivery](#) by comparing the risk of [death](#) for those fetuses remaining undelivered with the rate of neonatal death for each week of gestation.

According to the researchers, the risk of fetal death declined between 34 and 40 weeks' gestation, but then increased at term. The fetal death risk of those remaining undelivered was higher for high-risk pregnancies than for low-risk pregnancies. By 37 to 38 weeks' gestation, the number of [fetal deaths](#) exceeded the number of [neonatal deaths](#).

"The data reported herein suggest that the 'optimal time for delivery' is not necessarily the same for everyone, and, as is often the case in the practice of medicine, providers should individualize their approach for each patient," the authors write.

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