

## **Early Elective Deliveries**

Since 1979 the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has cautioned against inductions before 39 weeks in the absence of a medical indication. Potential risks are many, including increases in NICU admissions, hypoglycemia, transient tachypnea of the newborn, respiratory distress syndrome, ventilator support, suspected or proven sepsis and newborn feeding problems and other transition issues. Morbidity rates are doubled for each gestational week earlier than 38 weeks and a baby's brain at 35 weeks weighs only two-thirds of what it will weigh at 39-40 weeks.

This initiative has been supported by the March of Dimes for many years and it is also now a national quality measure supported by the National Quality Forum, the Leapfrog Group and The Joint Commission.

At Clark Memorial Hospital, we have a list of approved indications for early elective delivery as well as criteria for establishing gestational age. Cases are reviewed by obstetricians who rotate through this role on a yearly basis and outliers are reviewed by a departmental quality committee.