

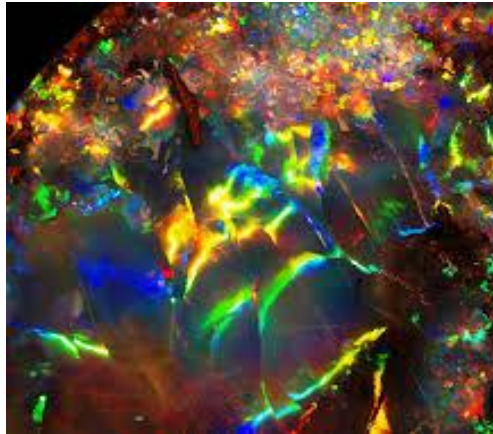
Freestyle Note:

You are a strong Opal woman & the child you are carrying is precious.

From your Opal friend, Darly - Founder of The Opal Place.

If you've ever seen an uncut or unpolished opal rock, it doesn't look very impressive & is often easily over-looked. But when the time & care is put into polishing & nurturing that rock, the result is always the revelation of the most beautiful & totally unique gem - **an Opal**

Darly Royan Paraha



Every Opal is unique to itself & has such a depth of beauty that this world sorely needs. You are that precious Opal.

**Beautiful
Precious
&
Unique**

Never doubt yourself or wish that you were someone else. Instead, take the time to start reclaiming who you truly are.

Prison is going to be just a part of your life-story, but you & this child you carry are eternal. **Stand Strong.**

Darly Royan Paraha

38 WEEKS PREGNANT

How Big Is Baby at 38 Weeks Pregnant?

At 38 weeks pregnant, baby is about 19.6 inches long and the average baby weight is 6.8 pounds.

38 Weeks Pregnant Is How Many Months?

38 weeks pregnant is eight months and about two weeks. You're about to head down the home stretch of pregnancy.

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38 WEEKS PREGNANT SYMPTOMS

Common 38 weeks pregnant symptoms have everything to do with being really, really pregnant. You're big; your baby's almost ready to arrive, and your body's getting ready for D-day (that's delivery day). Here's how your body is affected:

- **Braxton Hicks contractions.** At 38 weeks pregnant, contractions are to be expected. You may have been having these for weeks now, or you may be just starting to notice what seems like 38 weeks pregnant cramps or tightening of your belly. If your contractions aren't painful, and go away when you switch positions, they're still Braxton Hicks (a.k.a. "practice" contractions).
- **Increased vaginal discharge.** You may begin to notice globs of a thick, mucus-like substance this week. This stuff is called the mucus plug, and its presence is totally normal. It gets released as your cervix dilates in preparation for labour.
- **Itchy belly.** Your 38 weeks pregnant belly is stretched practically as far as it can go, so it makes sense that it's more sensitive. Hydration can help: at this point in pregnancy, keep using moisturizer and remember to drink lots of water. What's not normal is a rash, so let prison staff know if you get one.
- **Swollen feet and ankles.** You're 38 weeks pregnant, so basically you have the excuse to sit back and put up your feet as much as possible. Take regular walks though, to keep your blood flowing and reduce the swelling.

Do you have any of these symptoms? If you do write or draw about your experiences & feelings:

38 WEEKS PREGNANT SIGNS OF LABOUR

38 weeks pregnant is the perfect time to start being prepared for going into labour. The various signs of labour tend to fall into two categories, those that mean it's coming soon and those that mean it's happening now.

You'll go into labour soon if you notice these signs of labour at 38 weeks (though we can't say how soon, as every pregnancy is different):

- **Mucus plug and/or bloody show.** You may see a bit of thick mucus come out onto your underwear, either in one big glob or little by little. This is the mucus plug, which has been protecting your cervix all along.



As your cervix dilates, the mucus plug is released to make way for baby.

The mucus plug may or may not have a tinge of blood in it. If it does, that's the "bloody show."



- **Nausea.** Some women swear they start to feel sick to their stomach just before labor begins. So, at 38 weeks pregnant, nausea might mean baby's coming soon.
- **Diarrhea.** When you're 38 weeks pregnant, diarrhea could just be diarrhea or it could mean impending labor. That's because as your hormones change to prep for delivery, they can also stimulate your bowels.

THESE ARE THE SIGNS LABOUR HAS STARTED:

- **Water breaking.** If you feel water leaking out, either in a gush or a trickle, that's probably your amniotic fluid. Most women go into labour within 12 hours of their water breaking.
- **Regular contractions.** Has your 38 weeks pregnant belly been tightening regularly? If the contractions keep repeating and they seem to be coming more and more frequently, you're in labour. As your uterus contracts, it's dilating your cervix so baby can pass through at delivery. If this is your first pregnancy, you may have regular contractions for several hours before you go into what's known as "active labour"
- **Back pain.** Sometimes baby's positioned in a way that puts extra pressure on your spine. If you get constant back pain that's more severe than any you've had so far in pregnancy, or the pain radiates from your abdomen to your back (or vice versa), it could mean you're in labour.

Inside your 38 weeks pregnant belly, baby may have about an inch or so of hair already.

Baby's slowly shedding that white goo on the skin known as **vernix** (full name is: **vernix caseosa**) but you might see some of it at birth.

Question: What is vernix caseosa?

Answer: Vernix caseosa, also known as **vernix**, is the waxy or cheese-like white substance found coating the skin of newborn human babies. The **vernix caseosa** can also protect a newborn from infections after birth. This is because the coating contains antioxidants, as well as anti-infection and anti-inflammatory properties.

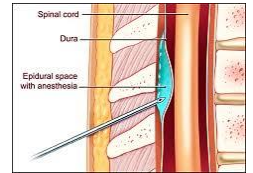


You may be taken to be checked to see that your baby's in a head-down position and to see if the head has moved down into the pelvic chamber. You may also have a pelvic exam, where your cervix will be checked for dilation (opening) and effacement (thinning) which are both signs your body is readying for labour.

Unfortunately, there's no "normal" when it comes to predicting labour based on dilation or effacement; if you've started, it could be hours or weeks. But even if you're not dilated at all, you could still go into labour tomorrow.

Question: What is an epidural?

Answer: An **epidural** injection is an injection of medication into the space around the spinal cord, also known as the **epidural space**, to provide temporary or prolonged relief from pain or inflammation



Don't be tempted to sleep on your belly because it's dangerous for your baby's health



Keep Safe & Sleep on your Side or Back

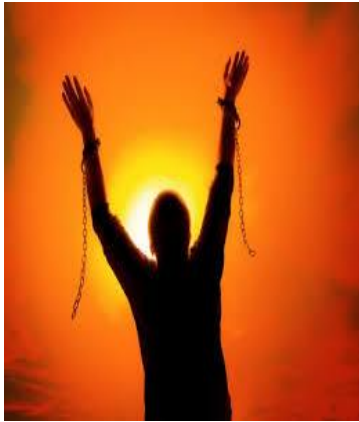


My Baby * My Choice of Name * My Gift for Life

Name	Country /Area of Origin	Boy / Girl or Both	History /Means
Keahi	Hawaiian	Boy or Girl	Fire
Mana	Hawaiian / Japanese & Maori	Boy	One who is full of spirit or Maori = Honour, authority, prestige & presence
Zhade	Jamaican	Girl	Princess of the African Violet
Alzhara	Islam	Girl	They are illuminated. Was also the nick-name of the Prophets daughter, Fatimah.
Bodin	Serbian	Boy	He who defends life
Luka	Croatian, Latin, Macedonian	Boy	One who shines his light on others
Marko	Croatian, Latin, Macedonian, Slovene, Spanish	Boy	One who is manly - but also kind & caring
Chibundo	Nigerian	Girl	God is my shelter
Blaze	European	Girl	A flame
Hiraka	Indian	Boy	A diamond

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Shackles, Hand-Cuffs, Restraints & Chains!

Don't ever let wearing shackles or hand-cuffs define you as a person or a mum. Yes we have to get escorted into hospitals & even go into labour wearing them - but don't you let it bother you - because it isn't personal against you - it's just normal prison protocol.

Unlike you, I wasn't pregnant when I went to prison, but I was taken in hand-cuffs to see my dying foster mother & then in shackles to her funeral. I just held my head high & thought to myself, "well this is sure something to tell the grand-kids about!" & another funny story is: The first time I went to prison I met this awesome woman while I was on remand. She'd had to be escorted on an airplane in shackles. When any people in public stared at her, she looked them in the eye & rattled her shackles and yelled out..." **The Good Lord loves shackles!**"

Always hold your head high my Opal friend.

Darly Royan Paraha

change the way you see things, and the things you see will change.



Labour is not a test. Your body knows how to give birth whether or not you've been to fancy pregnancy classes or not! *Darly Royan Paraha*



"Childbirth is an experience in a woman's life that holds the power to transform her forever. Passing through these gates - in her own way - remembering all the generations of women who walk with her...She is never alone." *Suzanne Arms*

**I AM WOMAN
I AM STRONG**



"Women are strong, strong, terribly strong. We don't know how strong until we were pushing out our babies."
Louise Erdrich



"Imagine what might happen if women emerged from their labour beds with a renewed sense of the strength and power of their bodies, and of their capacity for ecstasy giving birth" *Dr Christine Northrup*



Don't confuse childbirth feelings with pain. In childbirth you're going to FEEL a whole lot of different sensations & movement in places you've never imagined movement before - But these feelings are actually the power of birth. Engage with these feelings & let yourself be filled with awe at the power of your body. *Darly Royan Paraha*

I am a Strong Woman

Protective & Wise as a Lioness * Blessed is the Fruit of my Womb

My Diary Note:

My Opal friend - whether you're in prison for years or even life, you still need to step up & be a good parent & grow as a person so that you can support & inspire your child as they grow to adulthood & beyond.

My now adult son tells me that it would've been so easy for him to chuck in school and give into drinking & drugs during his teenage years, but that the thought of me trying to do my best to educate myself in prison as well as my deep love for him kept him on-track.

You can & will be the best Mum for this coming baby.

From your fellow Opal mum, Darly at The Opal Place



Darly & Rhett - her Son