

**You wouldn't rush your Thanksgiving dinner to the table, so why rush your baby's arrival?
March of Dimes, Healthy Start say it's worth the wait.**

This November, families will gather around the table with friends and relatives to celebrate one of America's most important and symbolic holidays – Thanksgiving. Preparations for Thanksgiving dinner begin well in advance of the celebration and few would think of rushing this process. Yet, too often, families don't exercise the same patience when it comes to their pregnancies.

Many families today are choosing to schedule their deliveries early even if there is no medical need. This increases the likelihood that a baby will be born before he is full-term. According to recent studies, deliveries that are even a few weeks early—before 39 weeks— are associated with increased admissions to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), breathing and feeding problems, developmental delays and disabilities, and even death. Alarmingly, scheduled deliveries for normal, healthy pregnancies have increased by 50 percent in the past 10 years.

This November in observance of National Prematurity Awareness Month, the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions (FAHSC) and the March of Dimes Florida are launching a statewide consumer education campaign, *Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait*, to raise awareness about the importance of the last weeks of pregnancy to healthy fetal development and reduced prematurity. Unless there is a medical need, waiting until labor begins on its own is best for both mother and baby.

To learn more about *Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait*, visit www.marchofdimes.com/39weeks.