

Induction of Labour

Information you need to know if your labour needs to be started

Induction of Labour

For most women labour starts on its own. For some women, labour needs help to get started. This is called an induction. Your doctor or midwife (care provider) will advise you that labour be induced if the risks to you or your baby are greater than the risk of carrying on with the pregnancy. Discuss this with your care provider. Induction of labour is generally safe. Discuss the risks of induction with your care provider.

Why would my labour be induced?

- The pregnancy is 10 days or more past your due date.
- The bag of water around the baby breaks before labour starts.
If labour does not start, the risk of infection increases with time.
- Your baby is growing too slowly.
- The fluid around the baby is low.
- You have medical illnesses such as high blood pressure, kidney disease or diabetes that might affect you or your baby's health.

How will I get an appointment for induction?

Your care provider will contact the hospital. Inductions are done 7 days a week. They are usually started during the day, but can be started at anytime.

A nurse at the hospital will call you when it is time to come to the hospital for your induction.

Eat breakfast, unless you are told not to. Do your usual activities, unless your care provider tells you otherwise.

If the hospital is very busy, your induction may be delayed. You may be asked to come to the hospital for assessment or to call your care provider.

How is labour induced?

The way labour is induced depends on the condition of the opening of the uterus (your cervix) and the reason for induction. Each has its benefits and risks. Please discuss these with your care provider.

Prostaglandin Gel

A medicated gel is put into your vagina. It softens the cervix and helps start contractions. The gel may feel warm after it is put in, but this sensation lasts only a short time. You and your baby are watched or monitored in bed for at least one hour. You will not be able to eat or drink during this time.

Most women are able to go home after this time. More than one dose of gel is often needed to start labour. Another dose of gel may be needed after 6 hours. Before you leave the hospital, the nurse gives you instructions on when to come back to the hospital.

Cervidil

A tampon with medication is put into your vagina. It softens the cervix and helps start contractions. You and your baby are monitored for at least one hour after the tampon is put in. You will not be able to eat or drink during this time.

Some women may go home, while others must stay at the hospital. It may take several hours before you feel any contractions. If labour does not start, a new tampon may be put in after 12 to 24 hours. If you leave the hospital, the nurse will give you instructions on when to come back to the hospital.

Oxytocin

This medication is given to you through a tube into a vein in your arm. This is called an intravenous or IV. You will stay at the hospital.

Women who have had a previous caesarean section and are attempting a vaginal birth after a cesarean are usually induced with oxytocin.

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Breaking the Water Sac, also called Rupturing the Membranes

If your cervix has begun to open, it may be helpful to break the water sac or membrane that surrounds your baby. This is done during a vaginal examination. It may be a bit uncomfortable, but it is not painful. It will not harm the baby. The water may continue to drip out.

Foley Catheter

A small tube called a catheter is placed into your cervix. Water is added into the tube to fill a balloon at the end of the tube. The pressure of the tube slowly stretches the cervix. This will help labour get started. It may be uncomfortable but is usually not painful. The tube is pulled tight and taped to your leg.

How will my baby be watched during the induction?

A machine called a fetal monitor checks your baby's heart beat and your contractions while you are at the hospital. Your contractions are watched to make sure that they are not coming too close together or lasting too long.

What do I do while waiting for labour to start?

It may be 1 to 2 days before labour starts. You may have to return to the hospital more than once.

When you go home:

- Eat and drink what you like. Don't force yourself to eat if you feel sick to your stomach. Do not drink any alcohol. If you are diabetic, follow your diet.
- Rest. This is important because once you are in labour you need a lot of energy. You may not be able to rest once you are in labour. Walking during early labour is helpful.
- A warm shower may be helpful if you are cramping or have backache.

Important if you have Cervidil:

If you have one painful contraction that lasts more than 2 minutes, take out the insert by pulling on the cord that is coming out of your vagina.

Contact your doctor or midwife if you have:

- Painful contractions that are coming regularly such as every 5 minutes
- A leak or gush of fluid from the vagina
- Concerns about your baby's activity
- Bright red bleeding from the vagina. It is normal to have a small amount of pink or brown bleeding after being examined.
- If you have Cervidil and it has been removed or fallen out.

Before you come back to the hospital please call the Induction Nurse or Charge Nurse in the Birthing Suite at: 604 875-2165.