

# Induction of Labour

## What is induction of labour?

Induction of labour is when a method or medication is used to start labour before it starts on its own. The goal of induction is to have a vaginal birth. Your doctor or midwife will talk with you about induction and whether it may be right for you and your baby.

## Why am I being offered induction?

Common reasons for induction include:

- You are past your due date.
- Your water has broken, but you have not gone into labour on your own.
- There is a medical concern for you or your baby (for example, you have diabetes or high blood pressure, or your baby is small).

## How is induction done?

Before induction can start, your cervix must be ready for labour. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus (womb) that opens at the top of the vagina. **If your cervix is not ready for labour**, the ways to get it ready include:

- › Placing a medication in your vagina (vaginal insert or gel)
- › Placing a balloon catheter through the opening of the cervix
- › Taking a pill by mouth

**If your cervix is ready for labour**, the ways to induce labour include:

- › Intravenous (IV) medication called oxytocin (sometimes called the “drip”)
- › Breaking your water using a small hook which makes a tiny hole in the membrane (tissue)

## How long does induction take?

- Induced labour is different for every person and every labour. It may take hours or days to get labour started. There is a chance induction may not work and you may not go into labour.
- You may have heard of other ways to start labour, but these methods have **not** been scientifically proven to work. These include: having sex, acupuncture, homeopathy, taking castor oil, and herbal supplements. These are not recommended after your water has broken.
- You have a higher risk of infection if you have sex after your water has broken.  
**Do not have sex after your water has broken.**

## Can I still follow my birth plan (for example, keep my support people, my plan for pain management and breastfeeding)?

We will do our best to support your plans for your labour, as well as any changes you want to make as your labour progresses.

## **Will induced labour be more painful than going into labour on my own?**

Every labour is different. Everyone's idea of pain is different. There is no evidence that induced labour is more painful than natural labour. Your pain relief choices are the same.

The health care team will choose a time with you for your induction. We will give you clear instructions. You will know who you can contact on the team, if needed.

## **What should I bring to the hospital?**

Bring the items that you will need for your stay in the hospital. This includes items for yourself, your support person(s), and your baby.

## **What will happen when I come to the hospital?**

- You will be checked by the nursing staff. They will ask about your pregnancy and general health history.
- Your temperature, blood pressure, pulse, contractions, and your baby's heart rate will be monitored during your induction and labour.
- You will have a vaginal (internal) exam (similar to a Pap test). This is done to decide the best way to induce your labour.
- We will talk with you about the different ways to induce labour.
- Nursing staff will be able to care for you during your induction and labour.

Nurses, doctors, midwives, and support staff are here for you. They will provide information and care for you and your family.

## **What if my induction is postponed?**

There are times when the Women and Children's Health Unit is very busy and for safety reasons an induction cannot be started. If this happens, you will be contacted by a Birth Unit nurse. The nurse will offer you a new date for induction. Some people find it helpful to write down questions to ask their health care providers.

## **Your return appointment:**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**It is important to call your primary health care provider or the Women and Children's Health Unit if there are any changes in your condition. For example:**

- › You have bleeding
- › Your water breaks
- › You have a headache or are seeing spots in front of your eyes
- › Your baby stops moving as much
- › You think you are in labour or feel unwell

**Women and Children's Health Unit phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other important phone numbers:** \_\_\_\_\_