

Induction of Labour

What is induction of labour?

Induction of labour is when a method or medication is used to start labour before it begins naturally. The goal of induction is to have labour with a vaginal birth. Your doctor or midwife will talk with you about whether induction is right for you.

Why am I being offered induction?

Common reasons for induction include:

- You are past your due date.
- Your water breaks 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 the baby is small).

How is induction done?

If your cervix is **not ready** for labour, we will talk with you about ways to get it ready.

These include:

- › Using a medication in the 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 (oxytocin, sometimes called the “drip”)
- › Breaking your water

How long does induction take?

- Induced labour is different for every woman and every labour. Getting labour started may take hours or days. There’s a chance your induction may not work and you may not go into labour at this time.
- 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, or taking herbal supplements or castor oil.
- You have a higher risk of infection if you have vaginal intercourse (sex) after your water has broken. Avoid having sex after your water has broken.

Can I still follow my birth plan? (For example: keep my support people, pain management and breastfeeding plans?)

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 set 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'll need for your stay in 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) examination. This is done to decide the best way to induce your labour.
- We will talk with you about the different ways to induce labour.
- You will have access to nursing support throughout 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 Maternal/Child 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 your induction. Some women find it helpful to write down questions to ask their health care providers.

Your return appointment:

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

It is important to call your health care provider or the Maternal/Child Unit if there are any changes in your condition. For example:

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

Maternal/Child Unit phone number: _____

Other important phone numbers: _____