

Induction of Labour and Cervical Ripening with Oral Misoprostol (Prostaglandin E₁) (Cytotec®)

Preparing the cervix for labour is called cervical ripening. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus (womb) that opens at the top of the vagina.

What is misoprostol (Cytotec®)?

- Misoprostol is a pill that contains a medication called prostaglandin E₁. Prostaglandin E₁ softens the cervix to get it ready for labour and to cause labour contractions. Cytotec® is the brand name of this medication.
- Misoprostol is taken by mouth. It can be taken every 4 hours, if needed. You may need to take it up to 3 times.
- Your doctor or midwife will talk with you about whether misoprostol for is right for you.

What should I expect when I get misoprostol?

- Your doctor or midwife will talk with you before you get misoprostol. Your blood pressure, temperature, pulse, and breathing will be checked. You may have blood work done. Your baby's heart rate will be monitored for 30 minutes to make sure it is normal.
- Misoprostol is taken by mouth with a glass of water. It is important to swallow the pill quickly before it dissolves (falls apart) in your mouth.
- After you take misoprostol, we will monitor your baby's heart rate and any contractions for 30 minutes to 1 hour. After that time, if you and your baby are well and you are not in active labour, your health care team may decide you are OK to walk around.
- While in the hospital, you can do regular activities, eat regular meals, and shower. **Remember to rest.**
- After about 4 hours you will be checked by your doctor or midwife. They will talk with you about whether you should take more misoprostol.

What are the possible complications of misoprostol?

A small number of people using misoprostol will have fever, nausea (feeling sick to your stomach), vomiting (throwing up), or diarrhea (loose, watery poop). Some people (1 to 2%) may have excessive (a lot of) contractions. These may or may not affect your baby. Your health care team will monitor you and your baby closely if you have any of these complications.

Tell a member of your health care team if:

- › you have regular contractions 5 minutes apart or less.
- › you have vaginal bleeding (like a period).
- › you think your water has broken.
- › you feel your baby's movements have changed (either more or less).
- › you have concerns and are not sure what to do.

**What are your questions? Please ask.
We are here to help you.**

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.