

CHILDBIRTH CENTER

Induction of Labour: General Information

What is an induction?

Induction of labour means starting labour artificially before its natural onset. The choice of method depends on factors such as how ready the cervix is for delivery. A combination of techniques is usually used for induction of labour.

Why is labour induced?

There are many reasons why labour may need to be started or induced. Talk with your Doctor about the reasons for induction.

How is labour induced?

One or a combination of these methods can start labour:

- Using medication to soften the cervix and/or start contractions (Prostin Gel, Cervidil or Oxytocin)
- Rupturing the membranes (breaking the waters)
- Foley Catheter induction

Prostaglandin Gel

Prostaglandin is a hormone that helps make the cervix softer and shorter in preparation for labour. Prostaglandin gel is placed in the vagina and is absorbed slowly. This procedure may be repeated after several hours.

Cervidil

Cervidil is a prostaglandin hormone that is used to soften the cervix in preparation for labour. It is a slow-release medication insert that is attached to a string similar to a tampon and is placed inside the vagina during a vaginal exam.

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Rupture of membranes

Labour may be started by rupturing the membranes if: the cervix is open slightly or partly dilated, and if the baby's head is well down in the pelvis.

Walking helps to start labour and helps you cope with labour pain. If labour does not begin within a reasonable time, a medication called Oxytocin may also be needed.

Foley catheter induction

A Foley catheter is a tube with a small balloon on the end that is inserted into the cervix causing the production of natural prostaglandins which will soften or shorten the cervix. The cervix may dilate (open) and contractions may begin.

Oxytocin medication

Oxytocin is a hormone that gradually starts contractions of the uterus. This medication is given through an intravenous (IV) in the arm. This hormone gradually starts contractions of the uterus by starting at a low dose and gradually increasing to mimic what happens naturally during labour. The baby's heartbeat will be monitored throughout this kind of induction. During induction, you can move around in bed, sit in a chair and get up to use the bathroom. If the cordless monitor is available you may be able to be up walking.

Your Physician will submit a "request for induction" to the Birth Unit and you will be contacted by the birth unit staff about when to come in. Inductions are performed on a priority basis and may need to be delayed for safety reasons if the unit is very busy. If you receive Prostaglandin Gel, Cervidil or a Foley catheter because you are past your due date, you may be able to go home for a few hours.

