

## Induction of labor

Sometimes your baby needs to be delivered before you go into labor on your own. Induction of labor means your doctor or midwife will use medication or other methods to start labor.

Induction of labor may be done:

- when a pregnancy has gone one to two weeks or more past the due date
- when there are health concerns, such as high blood pressure or diabetes

### Your induction is scheduled for:

Day \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Reason for induction \_\_\_\_\_

*Occasionally we have to reschedule inductions due to urgent medical cases or limited rooms available.*

### When do I come to the hospital?

On the day of your induction, Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital Family Birth Center will call you between 5:30 and 8:30 a.m. You may be asked to come in as early as 7 a.m. Patients come for inductions throughout the day, depending on available rooms. Your doctor or midwife may have discussed using a ripening agent to soften your cervix (see other side). In this case you may be called after dinner with a time to arrive in the evening.

### What happens when I arrive at the hospital?

When you arrive at the hospital, go directly to the Family Birth Center on third floor. You do not have to check in at the admitting desk. However, if you need help getting to the unit, including a wheelchair, stop at the admitting desk and call the Family Birth Center. A telephone and phone number are available at the desk.

Once you arrive at the Family Birth Center, a staff member will meet with you to:

- confirm your account information
- start your medical record
- obtain consent from you for hospital care

Next, you will be taken to a private labor and delivery suite. You will change into a hospital gown and meet your nurse. Your nurse will:

- place a monitor on your abdomen to check your baby's heart rate and the activity in your uterus.
- complete an admission form with you and do a physical exam.

Your doctor or midwife will talk to you about the induction and explain the method he or she feels is best for you and your baby. Your nurse will then review your care plan with you.

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Once your induction has started, your nurse will update your doctor or midwife on your progress. Your nurse also will answer your questions and attend to your needs.

### What methods are used to induce labor?

#### *Ripening agents*

Toward the end of pregnancy, your body makes prostaglandins, hormones that help soften and thin out your cervix. This is your body's way of getting ready for labor. Prostaglandins are hormones that your body makes naturally to soften and thin out your cervix.

Ripening agents work the same way. If your cervix is not soft and thin enough for labor to start, you may be given a ripening agent (medication) to help. These include Cervidil<sup>®</sup> and Cytotec<sup>®</sup>. They help soften your cervix and may cause labor to start.

- Cervidil is rubbed on a small pad with a tampon-like string attached. This medication is placed in the vagina near the cervix. It's left in place for eight hours to 12 hours while you sleep. Your baby will be monitored during this time.
- Cytotec is a small tablet placed in the vagina, near the cervix. Cytotec can be given several times. It's usually repeated about every four hours until your cervix is soft, or until you start having regular contractions. Your baby will be monitored after you receive Cytotec.

#### *Foley catheter*

A foley catheter is a flexible tube inserted into the cervix. Two to three tablespoons of sterile saline are injected into the tube. This inflates a balloon between the cervix and the baby's head. Pressure from the water balloon on the cervix often starts contractions. The balloon may come out on its own as the cervix dilates. It also can be removed by your doctor or midwife, if needed.

#### *Artificial rupture of the membranes*

Once your cervix is well-dilated your doctor or midwife may rupture your amniotic sac (the sac of water surrounding the baby). This is called breaking your water or artificial rupture of the membranes (AROM). It can help start or strengthen your contractions.

#### *Pitocin<sup>®</sup>*

Your body makes a hormone called oxytocin that naturally causes contractions. Pitocin is a synthetic form of oxytocin. It is given through an IV. Pitocin often is used if:

- your cervix is not well-dilated
- your contractions slow down and stall your labor
- your baby's head has not dropped far enough into your pelvis to break your water (AROM)

Pitocin is started at a low dose. It is gradually increased until your contractions are two to three minutes apart and your cervix begins to dilate. While you are receiving Pitocin, we will monitor your baby's heart rate and your contractions.