



Labor Induction: Information for Patients

What is a labor induction?

The use of medicine or other medical techniques to try to start the labor process. These methods will help dilate the cervix and stimulate contractions with the goal of a vaginal delivery. Induction may be done for medical reasons or personal reasons (elective).

What are some reasons a provider might recommend an induction?

We may recommend an induction for medical reasons if we think the risk of being pregnant is greater than the risk of delivery. This could be because you have additional risk factors like diabetes or high blood pressure, or you are a week or more past your due date.

How is the induction done?

1. **Cervical ripening:** process to soften and thin your cervix before labor can occur. This process can sometimes take a day or more and is done in the hospital.
 - a. **Misoprostol (Cytotec):** This medication is a prostaglandin hormone in the form of a tablet that is inserted into the vagina or taken by mouth. You may need multiple doses of this medication.
 - b. **Foley bulb:** This is a small tube/balloon inserted into the cervix and filled with fluid to help dilate or open the cervix.
2. **Amniotomy:** During a vaginal exam your provider may break your bag of water using a small plastic hook which can help stimulate contractions.
3. **Oxytocin (Pitocin):** This is a hormone given continuously through an IV to stimulate contractions. This is started at a very low dose and is gradually increased until labor is progressing well.

During an induction your provider will assess you and your baby regularly and may discuss changes to the plan based on these assessments. Your input matters during any decision making process, so please ask questions and share what you are thinking. While you are receiving a medication for induction, your provider will continuously monitor your contractions and your baby's heart rate.

What are the risks of being induced?

The risks of induction are similar to your risks with spontaneous labor. Some of the more common risks are listed below, but there may also be risks not on this list that your provider cannot predict.

- A longer labor
- Cesarean Section (C-Section)
- Use of forceps or vacuum during birth
- Side effects or other complications from the medications used, such as too many contractions

When will my induction be scheduled?

When you and your doctor decide an induction is needed, we will send information to Sparrow L+D to schedule the induction. We will receive a day although not a time. There may be a time listed on your Sparrow portal – this does not correlate with your induction time. On the day of your induction – the Sparrow L+D charge nurse will prioritize the inductions and call you with the time of the induction. **Your induction may be delayed hours to days depending on volume and medical need. Priority is given to those with more urgent medical needs. Please prepare to be flexible.**