



## **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. You may also have the option of an elective induction when you are 1 week before 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. Recent studies show that low risk women are not at increased risk of having a cesarean section (C-section) by having an induction.

### **When will my induction be scheduled?**

When you and your provider decide an induction is needed, we will send information to Sparrow L+D to schedule the induction. For medical inductions, we will receive a date although not a time. For elective inductions, you will be placed on a waiting list without a date associated with it.

For all inductions, the Sparrow L+D charge nurse will prioritize the inductions and call you to come in for the induction. There may be a date and time listed on your Sparrow portal – this does not correlate with your induction time. **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.**