



INDUCTION OF LABOR

Most babies are born between 37 and 42 weeks of pregnancy. At times, labor does not begin on its own or is slow to progress. In these situations, medications or other methods may be used to induce or augment labor.

Labor is induced with medications used to stimulate contractions which cause the cervix to open (dilate) and thin out (efface) to prepare for birth of the baby.

Induction of labor may be advised if the health of the patient or of the baby is at risk. Whether your labor will be induced will depend on the condition of you and your baby, how far along the pregnancy is, and how ready your cervix is for labor. Some reasons for induction of labor include being past your due date, high blood pressure, infection, your water breaking prior to the start of labor, and certain health problems. Labor may be induced in approximately 15% of pregnant women in the United States.

METHODS OF INDUCTION

Stripping the membranes:

During a vaginal exam, your doctor or midwife may sweep the finger over the thin membranes that connect the amniotic sack to the wall of the uterus. you may have some cramping or spotting after this is done. this causes the body to release prostaglandins. These hormones ripen the cervix and may cause contractions. If bleeding becomes heavy, call our office.

Rupturing the amniotic sac:

Breaking the bag of water can stimulate contractions. Your doctor or midwife may use a small plastic hook to make a small opening in the sac. Most women go into labor within hours of their water breaking

Foley insertion:

At times a catheter, which is usually inserted into the bladder, will be inserted into the opening of the cervix and the bulb inflated with sterile water. As your cervix opens, the catheter will fall out when it is approximately 3-4 cm dilated. This procedure is usually used with pitocin.

Pitocin (Pit/oxytocin):

This is a man-made hormone that causes contractions and increases the strength of the contractions. This medicine enters your bloodstream through an IV. A pump is used to control the amount you are given.

Prostaglandin agents (such as Cervidil):

These are types of medications that are used to induce labor. They are synthetic forms of prostaglandin that are similar to that which is naturally produced by the body. Cervidil is inserted into the vagina on a thin, flat sponge with a long string attached (similar to a tampon). It is usually kept in for 12 hours before it is removed and Pitocin started. We encourage you to rest and/or sleep during this time. Sometimes more than 1 dose is indicated.