



Information for  
patients and  
carers

## Induction of Labour using a Cervical Balloon

## What is induction of labour?

Induction of labour (IOL) is a process designed to start labour artificially. Most women will go into labour spontaneously by 42 weeks, but around one in five women will have her labour induced.

## Why is labour induced?

Your midwife or doctor will only recommend induction if they feel it will benefit your health, or that of your baby.

There are many reasons a woman may be offered an IOL. Some examples are: concerns regarding baby's growth, if pregnancy continues past 42 weeks or if you have a condition such as high blood pressure or diabetes.

Labour can be induced by either using artificial hormones (in vaginal gels), or by encouraging the release of natural hormones (by using a cervical balloon).

## How is labour induced with a cervical balloon?

A balloon catheter is a soft silicone tube which has two small inflatable balloons at the end. The balloons are inserted on either side of your cervix, and are inflated with a fluid called saline.

The gentle and constant pressure from the two balloons will release a natural hormone called prostaglandin. This hormone encourages your cervix to soften and dilate, and allows your midwife or doctor to break your waters.

Sometimes, the release of hormones is enough to trigger your waters to break naturally, and for labour to begin.

## How long does the cervical balloon stay in?

After the cervical balloon is inserted, it is usually removed after 12 hours. The balloon may fall out before this, as the cervix dilates.

## Why am I being offered induction using the cervical balloon instead of the vaginal gels?

The vaginal gels contain artificial hormones. Sometimes these can result in strong contractions. This is a particular risk for women who have had a previous Caesarean section, as it increases the risk of their scar rupturing.

Although the balloon also causes the release of hormones, the contractions that develop are not usually as strong, as the release of hormones is slower.

## What are the risks involved with balloon induction?

There is a very small risk of infection associated with balloon induction, but this risk is present with any vaginal procedure.

During insertion of the balloon you may experience some discomfort, but it should not be painful.

## How successful is the cervical balloon?

The balloon catheter softens and widens the cervix enough for the waters to be broken in 96 out of 100 women.

## What if the cervical balloon does not work?

If the cervical balloon cannot be inserted, or if it does not open the cervix enough for your waters to be broken, you might be offered an induction using artificial hormones or a Caesarean Section might be necessary. Your Doctor will discuss your options with you.

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact your midwife or doctor:

Antenatal Clinic, Sharoe Green Unit – 01772 524448

Antenatal Clinic, Chorley & South Ribble Hospital – 01257 245113

Maternity Triage – 01772 524495

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

**Gujarati:**

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપાકરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણા માં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

**Romanian:**

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi.”

**Polish:**

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

**Punjabi:**

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

**Urdu:**

دوسری زبانوں اور برائی اگر آپ کوہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لئے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو  
یہی چھپا جس سے ابی دست ہو سکت ہے براے مہر بیان پوے چھہی۔ معلومات

**Arabic:**

مطبوعة بأحرف كبيرة وبلغات إذا كنت تريد مساعدة في فهم هذه المعلومات يرجى أن تطلب  
أخرى يمكن توفير هذه المعلومات

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