

Centre intégré
de santé
et de services sociaux
de l'Outaouais

Québec 

INFORMATION ON THE INITIATION
OF LABOR



Information on the initiation of labor

For different reasons or medical conditions, the doctor has discussed with you labor induction. **Induction is the artificial beginning of your labor** with medication or other methods to give birth vaginally.

Why must my labour be induced? The reasons to induce labor are related to a condition that can affect you or your baby. They imply that prolonging your pregnancy will bring more risks than to artificially bring you into labour. The most common reason for this procedure is a prolonged pregnancy. A prolonged pregnancy refers to any pregnancy that reaches or surpasses 41 weeks. The pregnancy is considered post term when it reaches 42 weeks. This happens in about 6% of pregnancies, and here, at the Gatineau hospital, you would be put on the induction list between 41 and 42 weeks.

How will my labour be induced? How the doctor chooses to induce his patient depends on the condition of the cervix. If your cervix is not ready, the doctor will then need to use a procedure to mature it. This step is often necessary to insure an effective induction of your labour. At the Gatineau Hospital, we use one of these three methods **to mature the cervix**.

- ✓ **Cervidil:** A slim strip of fabric containing a hormone called prostaglandin that will mature the cervix. The monitoring of the contractions and the baby's heart beat will be done for 2 hours. Depending on your condition and the baby's you could go home and come back once your labour will start (follow the indications of the cervidil information pamphlet), or stay under observation at the hospital. If you are not in labour, a re-evaluation will be done in obstetrics after maximum 24 hours.
- ✓ **Balloon:** It is a catheter that has a balloon that we inflate behind the cervix. The catheter is installed through the vagina and the balloon is inflated with a liquid at the end of the catheter. The balloon puts pressure on the cervix to help it open. The catheter will fall once the cervix is open at around 3 cm.
- ✓ **Misoprostol :** tablet containing a hormone (prostaglandin) that will mature the cervix and induce labour. It is administered by mouth or intra-vaginally and is given every 4 hours if needed until a good evolution of the labour by the doctor.

Once the cervix is mature, we can proceed to **labour induction**, either by artificially rupturing the membrane (breaking your water) and/or with intravenous medication that is called oxytocin.

Labour induction

- ✓ **Artificial rupture of the membrane** (water bag): It is done by the doctor during a vaginal examination. It is a safe procedure and it is not painful. The contractions should start in the hours following the rupture.
- ✓ **Oxytocin:** Installation of an IV with a hormone (oxytocin) similar to the one your body creates to give you contractions. We bring up the dosage based on a hospital protocol we use to give regular and effective contractions that will dilate your cervix. A strict monitoring of your well-being and of your baby's will be done throughout your labour. This method can be combined with the balloon to be more effective.
- ✓ **Misoprostol :** tablet containing a hormone (prostaglandin) that will induce labour. It is administered by mouth or intra-vaginally and is given every 4 hours if needed until a good evolution of the labour by the doctor.

All these options are safe for you and your infant. The doctor will discuss with you the option that is the most appropriate for your situation. The doctors will inform you about the advantages and the risks associated with the chosen met.

What is the induction list? Doctor will send the labour induction request to the birthing center at the Gatineau Hospital to plan the procedure. At that moment, you will be put on the induction list. That will be seen and prioritized everyday by the team leader in obstetrics.

What should I expect now that I must wait, now that I am on the list? The day of the induction, you could be called anytime between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. Because the level of activity on the birthing unit can fluctuate all the time, your induction might be pushed forward or back by one day. If that is the case, the team leader will contact you. You can continue your daily activities and take your regular medication. Please make sure you can easily access the phone numbers you have provided to the hospital.

Must I call the hospital for my appointment? No, All the patients will be contacted with the phone numbers you have provided to the hospital. The team leader of the birthing unit will contact you during the day, when there will be openings to proceed with your labour induction. **It is not necessary to call.** Remember that you could be called all the time, between 6h and 20h.

Important: Please make sure your grey hospital card is up to date and that we have on file the right phone number to reach you.

For any questions or details concerning your induction, please contact your doctor.

When should I come to the hospital? Even if you are on the induction list, you must present yourself at the birthing unit.

If you are losing liquid (small quantities or big quantities).

If you have vaginal bleeding (the quantity does not matter, if there is presence of bloody you should come to the hospital).

If you start to have regular and painful contractions (you can refer yourself to the labour pamphlet).

If you feel that your baby is not moving like he/she normally does.

If you have a specific medical pregnancy related condition and you feel like it is deteriorating.

Any other symptom that should be evaluated by a doctor.

For any other question, the nurses at the birthing unit will answer 24/7 at this number: 819-966-6395

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Sources : directive clinique de la SOGC, «Déclenchement du travail », N°296, septembre 2013.

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