

# Inducing labour

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	د دې لپاره چې دا معلومات ولولئ او غور ورته ونیسئ، د پاپیلیون د ژباړې نرم افزار اپ Papillon Translation app خپل هوښیار تلیفون ته داوڼلود یا راپورته کړئ او د کیو آر QR code کوډ سکن کړئ.
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An induced labour is one that's started artificially. Every year, 1 in 5 labours are induced in the UK.

Sometimes labour can be induced if your baby is overdue or there's any risk to you or your baby's health. This risk could be if you have a health condition such as high blood pressure, for example, or your baby is not growing.

Induction will usually be planned in advance. You'll be able to discuss the advantages and disadvantages with your doctor and midwife, and find out why they think your labour should be induced.

It's your choice whether to have your labour induced or not.

If your pregnancy lasts longer than 42 weeks and you decide not to have your labour induced, you should be offered increased monitoring to check your baby's wellbeing.

## Why you might be induced

- if you're overdue
- if your waters have broken
- if you or your baby have a health problem

### **If you're overdue**

Induction will be offered if you do not go into labour naturally by 42 weeks, as there will be a higher risk of stillbirth or problems for the baby.

### **If your waters break early**

If your waters break more than 24 hours before labour starts, there's an increased risk of infection to you and your baby.

If your waters break after 34 weeks, you'll have the choice of induction or expectant management. Expectant management is when your healthcare professionals monitor your condition and your baby's wellbeing, and your pregnancy can progress naturally as long as it's safe for both of you.

Your midwife or doctor should discuss your options with you before you make a decision. They should also let you know about the newborn (neonatal) special care hospital facilities in your area.

If your baby is born earlier than 37 weeks, they may be vulnerable to problems related to being premature.

If your waters break before 34 weeks, you'll only be offered induction if there are other factors that suggest it's the best thing for you and your baby.

### **If you have a health condition or your baby is not thriving**

You may be offered an induction if you have a condition that means it'll be safer to have your baby sooner, such as diabetes, high blood pressure or intrahepatic cholestasis of pregnancy.

If this is the case, your doctor and midwife will explain your options to you so you can decide whether or not to have your labour induced.

## **Membrane sweep**

Before inducing labour, you'll be offered a membrane sweep, also known as a cervical sweep, to bring on labour.

To carry out a membrane sweep, your midwife or doctor sweeps their finger around your cervix during an internal examination.

This action should separate the membranes of the amniotic sac surrounding your baby from your cervix. This separation releases hormones (prostaglandins), which may start your labour.

Having a membrane sweep does not hurt, but expect some discomfort or slight bleeding afterwards.

If labour does not start after a membrane sweep, you'll be offered induction of labour. Induction is always carried out in a hospital maternity unit. You'll be looked after by midwives and doctors will be available if you need their help.

## How labour is induced

If you're being induced, you'll go into the hospital maternity unit.

Contractions can be started by inserting a tablet (pessary) or gel into your vagina.

Induction of labour may take a while, particularly if the cervix (the neck of the uterus) needs to be softened with pessaries or gels. If you have a vaginal tablet or gel, you may be allowed to go home while you wait for it to work.

You should contact your midwife or obstetrician if:

- your contractions begin
- you have not had any contractions after 6 hours

If you've had no contractions after 6 hours, you may be offered another tablet or gel.

If you have a controlled-release pessary inserted into your vagina, it can take 24 hours to work. If you are not having contractions after 24 hours, you may be offered another dose.

Sometimes a hormone drip is needed to speed up the labour. Once labour starts, it should proceed normally, but it can sometimes take 24 to 48 hours to get you into labour.

## What induced labour feels like

Induced labour is usually more painful than labour that starts on its own, and you may want to ask for an epidural.

Your pain relief options during labour are not restricted by being induced. You should have access to all the pain relief options usually available in the maternity unit.

If you are induced you'll be more likely to have an assisted delivery, where forceps or ventouse suction are used to help the baby out.

## If induction of labour does not work

Induction is not always successful, and labour may not start.

Your obstetrician and midwife will assess your condition and your baby's wellbeing, and you may be offered another induction or a caesarean section.

Your midwife and doctor will discuss all your options with you.

## Natural ways to start labour

There are no proven ways of starting your labour yourself at home.

You may have heard that certain things can trigger labour, such as herbal supplements and having sex, but there's no evidence that these work.

Other methods that are not supported by scientific evidence include acupuncture, homeopathy, hot baths, castor oil and enemas.

Having sex will not cause harm, but you should avoid having sex if your waters have broken as there's an increased risk of infection.

For more information on induction, you can read the NICE information for the public on induction of labour.

You can find pregnancy and baby apps and tools in the NHS apps library.

**The information for this leaflet has been taken from the NHS website,**  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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