

What to expect during a labor induction

A labor induction is the use of medications or other methods to begin the labor process. An induction may be recommended if there is a concern for the health of the mother or unborn baby, if the pregnancy has continued at least 41 weeks (one week past the due date), or if you and your provider agree to an induction.

Before Labor Induction

- For **Non-Medical (Elective) inductions**, you will receive a call when availability permits. See separate flyer for more information.
- For a **scheduled Medical induction**, call the Labor and Delivery unit at (540) 588-9849 two hours prior to your induction time.
- Scheduled medical inductions may need to be rescheduled if the unit is currently caring for a high volume of patients.

At the Hospital

- If your cervix is not dilated, our providers will perform cervical ripening. This can be done by inserting medication into the vagina or using a thin tube that has an inflatable balloon on the end that is inserted into the cervix.
- Once the cervix is a few centimeters dilated, Pitocin may be started through your IV. Pitocin is a medication that causes contractions of the uterus.
- During the induction process your care team may recommend rupturing the amniotic sac (also known as breaking your water). To do this, the provider will make a small hole in the sac with a special tool.
- IV pain medication and epidurals are available if you feel they are needed.
- Labor tubs and birthing balls may be available for patients without an epidural.
- An induction of labor can take two to three days, especially if it is your first baby and your cervix is not dilated.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if the induction does not work?

If your labor does not progress and the care team feels it is safe for you and your unborn baby to continue the pregnancy, you may be sent home with a plan to try again in a few days.

What are the risks of a labor induction?

If you have a long induction process, it may increase the risk of infection for you and your unborn baby. If your unborn baby does not tolerate uterine contractions or your labor does not progress appropriately, a cesarean delivery surgery may be recommended.

Who will be on my care team?

- Nursing: a dedicated labor nurse to care for you.
- Providers: Your care will be overseen by a team that may include Certified Nurse Midwives, Physicians, Anesthesiologists, and Residents/Medical Students who are under the supervision of an attending faculty physician.
- Ancillary Team: Additional support staff includes environmental services, patient care technicians, laboratory professionals, and food services to ensure your comfort and well-being.

Together, this team is committed to ensuring an excellent experience during your stay.

