



Tameside Maternity Unit

Going Home With Propess

Patient Information Leaflet

June 2018

What is induction of labour?

In most pregnancies women go into labour on their own between 37 and 42 weeks. Induction is a way for starting this process off artificially. The aim of induction is to start off the process of contractions which lead to softening and opening of your cervix (neck of the womb) so that you can give birth to your baby. The most common reason why labour is induced is that your baby is overdue. If you have not gone into labour by 7 days after your baby is due you will be offered a date for induction of labour. Around 1 in 5 labours are induced.

Why do we offer induction?

We offer induction if the pregnancy is prolonged in order to prevent some of the risks to the baby associated with a pregnancy prolonged beyond 42 weeks.

The risk of baby passing meconium (opening their bowels) before birth increases. This can cause severe problems for the baby if they breathe it in as they are born.

The above risks are very small, but they are reduced by offering induction of labour. If you want any more information about these risks ask your midwife or doctor.

How is natural labour encouraged?

Your midwife or doctor may offer you a membrane sweep between 40 and 41 weeks.

Membrane sweep

This involves your midwife or doctor doing a vaginal examination during which one or two fingers are put just inside the cervix (neck of the womb) and making a circular sweeping movement to separate the membranes from the cervix. This stimulates the cervix to release labour inducing hormones which are naturally produced by the body. Membrane sweeps are usually performed in the antenatal clinic or in a community clinic. This procedure may cause some discomfort or bleeding (a 'show') but will not harm your baby. It increases the likelihood of labour starting naturally within the next 48 hours and can reduce the need for induction of labour.

Just in case this isn't successful you will be given a date to come into hospital to be induced. This is usually around 12 days past your due date.

What happens on the day of induction?

At Tameside Hospital most inductions of labour are started off on the Triage Unit. We ask you to arrive at your appointed time. When you arrive after an initial assessment of you and your baby a midwife will perform a vaginal examination to assess the cervix. During this examination a decision is made about the best way to start off your labour. Labour can be induced by several different methods but the most common is the use of a Propess pessary, this is a tampon containing the hormone Dinoprostone which is released over 24 hours and encourages labour to start.

What you need to be aware of once the Propess pessary is in place

After the pessary has been inserted you will be asked to lie down for 30 minutes. This allows the pessary to absorb moisture from your vagina, which will make the pessary swell and prevent it from falling out. Before and after the Propess has been inserted we will check your baby's wellbeing by monitoring its heart rate pattern using a CTG machine. After about 30-40 minutes if all is well you will be asked to gently move about then after a short time you may go home and wait for your labour to start. You will be given a date and time, about 24 hours after the Propess was inserted, to come back to triage for another assessment should you not go into labour spontaneously. We do recommend that once your labour starts that you come back to the maternity unit so we can support you during your labour and birth. As you have been given

medication it is important that we monitor you and the baby for the possible side effects as described above.

If the string from the pessary moves to the outside of your vagina you must be careful not to pull or drag on it, as this may cause the pessary to come out. Please take **special care** when wiping yourself after going to the toilet, after washing & when getting on & off the bed.

In the unlikely event that the pessary should come out, please call the phone numbers you have been given immediately. The pessary will need to be reinserted.

What are the benefits of ‘home induction’?

Induction of labour can often be a slow process and many women are more comfortable at home in their own surroundings at this time. You can stay mobile and keep busy, and eat and drink and sleep as you wish. In a more relaxed environment some women find the early part of the induction easier at home. We recommend that you do not have sexual intercourse once the induction process had started.

What happens if I go home ?

If you choose to have home induction we will plan for you to return to the unit after 24 hours if your labour has not started. You will be reassessed and the next stage of your induction either with the use of Prosin pessaries or breaking your waters will be planned. From this time we will ask you to stay in hospital until your baby is born.

If you go in to labour in the first 24 hours or if your waters break you will contact the labour ward and arrange to come in. As your labour has been induced we advise that you should not have a home birth but should come back to the hospital for the birth of your baby.

When should I call the maternity unit?

If any of the following occur please call the labour ward for advice on 0161 922 6172/6173.

- If you start having regular contractions
- If you start to have contractions very strongly, very quickly (more than 5 contractions in 10 minutes) or you have a continual contraction that lasts several minutes
- If you think your waters have broken (this may be a gush of fluid or a continual dribble of fluid from your vagina)
- If you are concerned about your baby’s movements
- If you have continual abdominal pain
- If you have vaginal swelling or soreness
- If you feel unwell and/ or have difficulty breathing and / or have vomiting or diarrhoea
- If you start bleeding vaginally
- If your Proress pessary falls out
- If you are at all worried or have any questions

Is home induction safe?

Home induction is not suitable for everyone and your midwife will check that you are suitable for home induction before proceeding.

- Most importantly you need to want home induction, if you would prefer to stay in hospital for the whole of your induction we will of course support you in this.
- Your pregnancy should be low risk with no concerns about you or your baby.
- You should have a phone with credit to allow you to keep in touch with the hospital
- You should have access to a car to get back to hospital when you need to
- You should live within 30 minutes travelling time of the hospital
- You should have someone who can stay with you the whole time once the induction has started
- You should understand and speak enough English to be able to communicate with the staff when you are at home.

Propess is not licenced by the manufacturer for use at home so when given for home induction it is used 'off-licence'. However many maternity units in the UK are now safely using Propess in this way.

Where can I get more information?

- National Childbirth Trust Tel: 0870-444-8707 www.nct.org.uk
- Royal College of Obstetrician and Gynaecologists [Tel:020-772-6200](tel:020-772-6200)
www.rcog.org.uk
- NHS Choices
<http://www.nhs.uk/planners/pregnancycareplanner/pages/overdue.aspx>

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to remind you

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or on audiotape. If you require either of these options please contact the Patient Information Centre on 0161 922 5332

