

Foley Balloon Catheter Induction of Labour

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Why do I have this patient information?

You have been given this patient information as you may be offered a Foley Balloon Catheter induction of labour when you come for your induction procedure.

We hope this patient information will be a good source of information for you and a starting point for discussions surrounding your care.

What is Induction of Labour?

Most pregnancies go into spontaneous labour between 37 and 42 weeks. In some pregnancies we need to start labour off artificially; this is called induction of labour.

For your baby to be born the neck of the womb (cervix) must shorten, soften and open. This happens when your womb tightens and relaxes. This process is also known as having contractions.

What will happen when I come into hospital?

When you arrive at hospital the midwife caring for you will discuss the process in full. Please make sure you discuss any questions or worries/concerns you may have. We are here to help and make sure you have a positive experience in our care.

After your arrival the midwife will do a full antenatal check to make sure that all is well to start the induction process. This will include having your observations taken, feeling your tummy for the position of your baby and monitoring your baby's heartbeat on cardiotocograph (CTG) machine. It is at this point that we will plan together with yourself, the midwives and the doctors on how we will induce your labour.

Why are you offering me a Foley Balloon Catheter?

There are several ways to induce labour, and one way is to have a Foley Balloon Catheter. This is used in many other hospitals, but it is a change of practice for both Pilgrim and Lincoln County Hospitals.

The advantages of the Foley Balloon Catheter compared to our other methods are:

- Less chance of the womb contracting too much, therefore, providing a more positive experience for both mummy and baby.
- Medication is not required to start the process of induction.
- Less side effects because no medication is needed to start the process.

How will you insert the Foley Balloon Catheter?

Following a monitoring of your baby's heartbeat your midwife will perform a vaginal examination and gently insert a soft tube (catheter) into the opening of your cervix. The Foley Balloon Catheter has a balloon near the tip that will be inflated with sterile water. The bottom of the catheter will hang down and be taped to the inner part of your thigh with some gentle downward pressure applied. The pressure should soften and open your cervix enough to start labour contractions or open your cervix enough for your waters to be broken.

How long will I have the Foley Balloon Catheter in for?

The catheter may fall out on its own if your cervix starts to open enough. If this does not happen your midwife will remove the catheter at 24 hours. After the catheter has been removed the midwife will break your waters and if your contractions don't start on their own a hormone drip will be used.

What if I don't want the Foley Balloon Catheter?

Your midwife and doctor will discuss alternative options if you don't wish to have the Foley Balloon Catheter.

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You need to be aware that although Foley Balloon Catheters are widely used all around the world to induce labour, the Foley company have not sought a license for this. There have been many research trials that have shown that this is a safe, effective method of induction. It is a recommended method of Induction from both the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) and The World Health Organisation (WHO). If you would prefer not to have this method of induction, please speak with your midwife and doctor.

The procedure may be uncomfortable, but it should not be painful.

In a small amount of cases induction of labour is not successful. If this happens to you, your midwife and your doctor will have a discussion regarding your ongoing plan of care.

Maternity Department

Pilgrim Hospital, Labour Ward	01205 445424
Pilgrim Hospital, Maternity Ward	01205 445429/445427
Lincoln County Hospital, Bardney Ward	01522 573317
Lincoln County Hospital, Nettleham Ward	01522 573134

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