

Ref: FOI/GS/ID 5343

**Please reply to:**  
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Email: mtw-tr.foiadmin@nhs.net

15 October 2019

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000**

I am writing in response to your request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in relation to Induction of Labour leaflet.

*You asked:*

*I would like to request that a copy of the following documents [or documents containing the following information] be provided to me: Leaflet of Induction of Labour (IOL).*

Trust response:

We have recently reviewed this leaflet and are currently in the process of reviewing the language used.

Once this has been completed we will then request a Birth Voices review as well.

Please find below the IOL process leaflet currently used by the Trust:

# Membrane sweeping and induction of labour with Propess® (dinoprostone)

## Information for patients

In most pregnancies labour starts naturally between 37 weeks and 42 weeks, leading to the birth of the baby. Induction of labour is a process designed to start labour artificially. The reasons for this should have been discussed with you, but if you are not clear about anything please ask your midwife or doctor to explain again before you decide whether you want to go ahead.

Inducing labour without a good medical reason is **not** recommended. Your labour may be less straightforward, more painful and may also take longer to start. Induction of labour has also been shown to increase the likelihood of a caesarean section, ventouse (suction cap) or forceps delivery when compared to women who go into labour naturally.

### Is there anything else that can help labour start?

#### Membrane sweeping

Research has shown that a membrane sweep can be a more natural way of starting labour than using medication and this will be offered to all women whose pregnancies are overdue before other methods of induction are arranged.

A membrane sweep is usually done by your midwife. While internally examining the vagina she will simply sweep a finger around the neck of your womb (cervix). The aim is to separate the membranes around your baby from your cervix; this releases hormones called Prostaglandins.

If the membrane sweep is successful labour may start within the next two days. It has a higher chance of working if the neck of your womb is already softening and preparing for labour.

#### Membrane sweeping – are there any risks or complications?

In uncomplicated pregnancies it will not cause any harm to either you or your baby. It can sometimes be uncomfortable as the neck of the womb is often difficult to reach before labour begins. There may be some slight 'spotting' of blood immediately afterwards. This is normal.

### When do I need to come into hospital?

If this is your first baby you will be asked to come into hospital at around 8.00pm on the date arranged. If this is not your first baby you will be asked to come into hospital at around 8.00am on the date arranged.

Please phone the Delivery Suite an hour before this to make sure there is a bed available.

### What will happen when I am admitted for induction of labour?

On admission to the unit the midwife will perform a vaginal examination to see if your cervix is ripe (ready for labour). If your cervix is ripe and open adequately we may recommend breaking your waters, by passing a special

instrument through the cervix (more information is given below). Occasionally the waters break on their own during examination, as in normal labour.

If your cervix is not ripe we will try to ripen it using a pessary called Propess<sup>®</sup> (dinoprostone). The pessary, which is inserted into the vagina, looks like a very small tampon. It contains Prostaglandins which are released slowly over 24 hours to ripen your cervix.

Once inserted into the vagina it will stay there for 24 hours. There is a string attached to the pessary to allow us to remove it easily. The string will be placed inside the vagina.

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

After the pessary has been inserted you will be asked to lie on your side for 30 minutes while the pessary absorbs moisture from your vagina. This will make the pessary swell and prevent it from falling out. You may then move around as normal. You do not need to stay in bed. The midwife will check your blood pressure and pulse and will listen to the baby's heartbeat every four hours.

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 yourself and getting on and off the bed. In the unlikely event that the pessary should come out please inform the midwife **immediately**. If the pessary has remained clean (i.e. dropped onto clean bed sheets and not dropped onto the floor) it can be reinserted, otherwise a new pessary will need to be inserted.

Tell the midwife if you experience regular contractions, your waters break or if you are worried. If labour should start, once your cervix is at least 3cm dilated the pessary will be removed.

### **What happens 24 hours after the pessary is inserted if labour has not started?**

The pessary will be removed and the midwife will examine you internally to see if the waters around the baby can be broken. However, if your cervix is still not ripe the doctor will discuss further treatment with you at this time.

### **Breaking the waters (rupturing the membranes)**

One to four hours after your waters are broken you may be examined again. If your contractions have not started the staff may recommend that you have a hormone drip (called syntocinon) to strengthen contractions and encourage your cervix to dilate. Syntocinon will not be used while you have a Propess<sup>®</sup> (dinoprostone) pessary in place.

If you have a syntocinon drip it is advisable to have the baby's heart monitored continuously, however, there is no need to lie down throughout labour. Many women find it easier to manage labour if they are upright and mobile. Ask your midwife to help you get into positions that are comfortable for you.

### **Can I shower or bathe after the pessary is inserted?**

Yes. However the manufacturer advises against excessive use of soap and care should be taken not to pull the string attached to the pessary.

### How will I know what is happening?

Your midwives and doctors will keep you informed of your progress and will discuss with you how you wish your labour to be managed. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

You and your baby will be regularly monitored for the safety of both of you. As with natural labour we want you to be as comfortable as possible and all suitable methods of pain relief will be discussed with you.

The induction process can take some time to get under way (sometimes two days). It may be helpful to inform your family of this so that they do not get too anxious during this time.

If the Delivery Suite is very busy or there is an emergency it may be necessary to delay your time of arrival or delay your induction. We understand that this can be frustrating for you and your family and will try to keep you informed if this should be necessary.

### Please use this space to write any notes or questions you may have

#### Contact Details

##### Maidstone Hospital

Delivery Suite

☎ 01622 224426

##### Pembury Hospital

Delivery Suite

☎ 01892 633500

#### Further information and advice can be obtained from

NHS Direct

☎ 0845 46 47

NHS Direct online

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

**MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the PALS Team. We will do our best to arrange this.**

#### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you would like to raise any concerns, make comments and suggestions or require information on Trust services, you can contact **PALS**. Office opening times are Monday to Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm. Both offices offer a 24 hour answering machine. Messages will be responded to within one working day, so please do leave a contact number.

PALS Maidstone Hospital

☎ 01622 224960

PALS Kent & Sussex and Pembury Hospitals

☎ 01892 632953

PALS Email

[mtw-tr.palsmaid@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.palsmaid@nhs.net)

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☎ 07747 782317

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☎ 01622 224843

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