

Induction of Labour (IOL) Infographic

We have looked at all the births at Tunbridge Wells Hospital (TWH) in 2024 to give you the information below. This might help to answer some of your questions alongside the [Induction of Labour Information leaflet](#). Every pregnancy and birth is different, so this is just a guide.

Please always speak to a midwife or doctor about your own circumstances.

What is Induction of Labour?

Induction of Labour (IOL) is when doctors or midwives help start your labour instead of waiting for it to begin naturally.

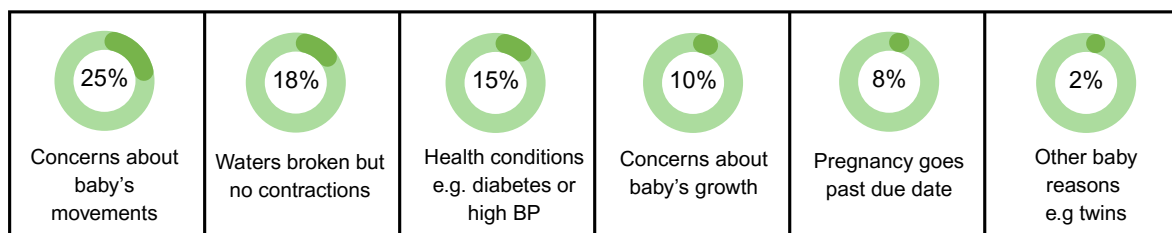


Around 1 in every 4 births at Tunbridge Wells Hospital have their labours induced.

Why might induction of labour be recommended?

There are different reasons why you might be offered IOL. These reasons are personal to you and your baby. It is usually offered when there is a medical reason or if something about your health or your baby's health shows that starting labour is safer than waiting for it to happen by itself.

The most common reasons to be offered an induction of labour are:



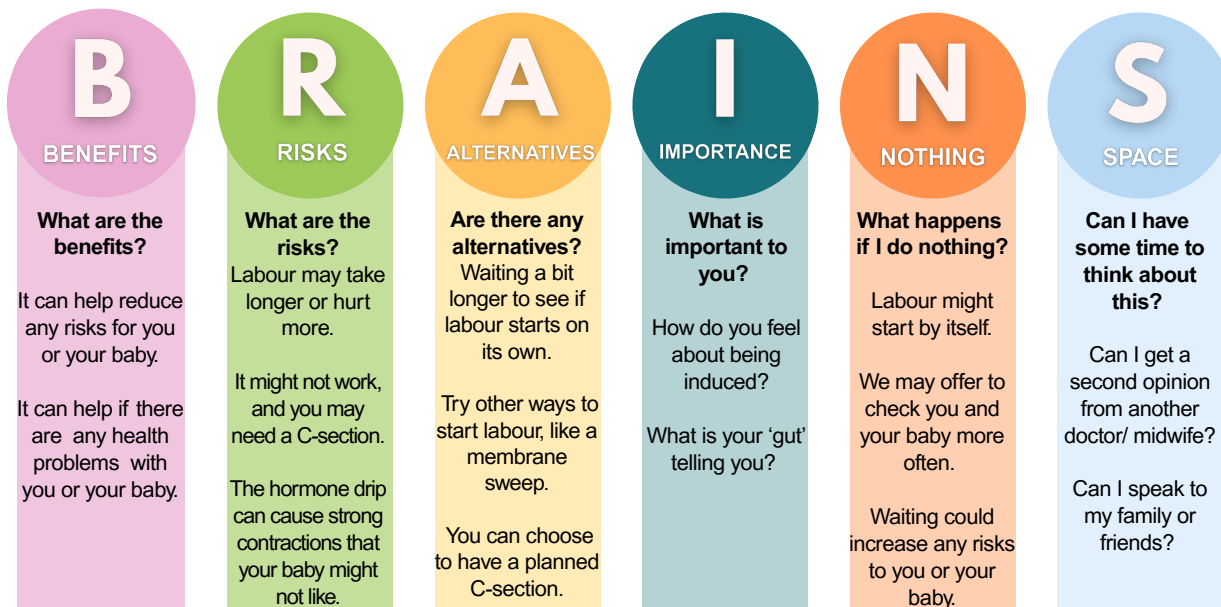
Questions to ask if an induction of labour is offered to you...

"Is my body ready for labour to be induced?"

"Is there information about my health or my baby's health that shows it's safer to induce labour rather than wait for the baby to be born naturally?"

"What are the risks and benefits?"

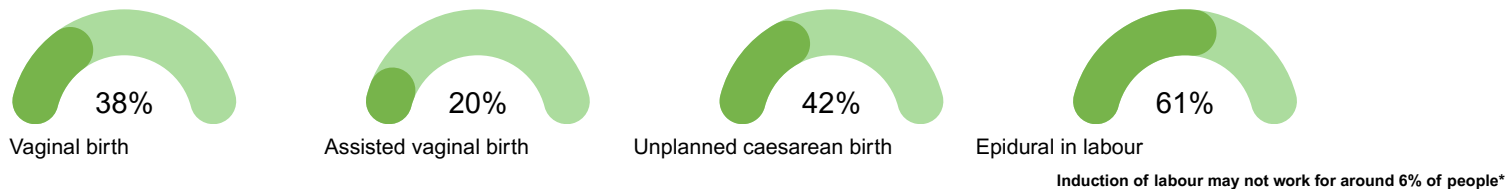
The "BRAINS" acronym can be used to help make decisions. Here's how it can help when you're thinking about and talking to a doctor or midwife about induction of labour :



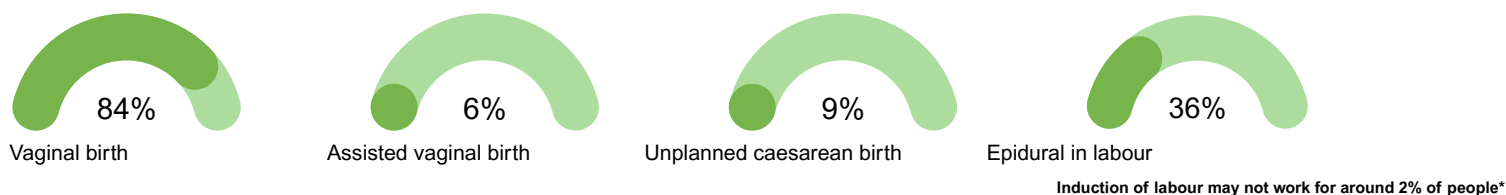
What kind of birth might I have?

If your labour is induced, there is a higher chance you will have an unplanned caesarean birth. It is important to remember that this might also be because those who need an induction often have more complicated pregnancies.

If this is your first baby:

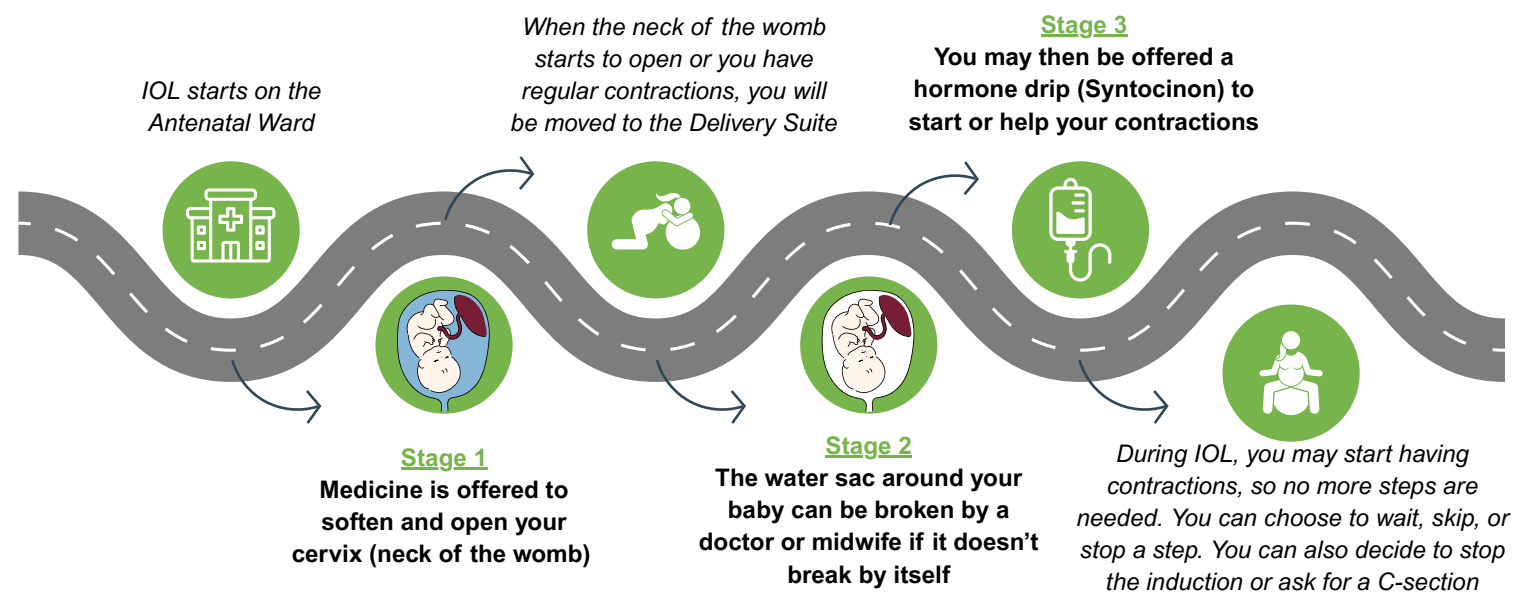


If this is your second or subsequent baby:



What will happen during an Induction of Labour?

Starting your labour happens in different stages. These steps usually follow one another, but not always, and it might take some time, sometimes up to 5 days:



FAQ Frequently asked questions

? Do I have to be induced?

No, it's your choice.
We may offer to check you and your baby more often.

? What is the medicine given to soften and open the cervix?

'Propress' is a hormone pessary, like a small tampon, that goes inside the vagina and can stay there for 24 hours. 'Prostin' is a hormone gel that is also put into the vagina, usually after the pessary has been in place.

? What's a membrane sweep?

Your midwife or doctor sweeps their finger around your cervix during an internal examination, which may stimulate hormones that help start your labour.

? How long does an induction take?

It's different for everyone, but it might take up to **5 days**. You birth partner can stay with you. Bring things to keep you busy, and everything for you and your baby. If you take medicine or check your blood sugar, bring those too.

? Is induced labour more painful?

It can be, once you are on the Delivery Suite you'll still be able to have pain relief like gas and air, an epidural, or even a water birth. A doctor or midwife will discuss your options with you further.

? What if induction doesn't work?

Midwives and doctors will check how you and your baby are doing. You might be offered a different method of induction, to wait a bit longer, or to have a caesarean section birth.

Please always speak to a midwife or doctor about your own circumstances.