

INDUCTION OF LABOR

What is Induction?

According to ACOG (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists), Induction is the use of medications or other methods to bring on labor.

Augmentation is when methods are used to speed up or slow down a labor that has already started. A labor can be medically augmented even if it began naturally. However, having labor induced does increase the likelihood the labor will be further augmented.

Medical Induction and Augmentation Terms:

"Stripping" or "sweeping" the membranes - a procedure where the caregiver inserts a finger into the cervix and carefully separates the bag of waters from the uterus.

Prostaglandins - drugs used to ripen/soften and thin out the cervix, a process that needs to happen for the cervix to dilate/stretch in order to birth. This could be a gel, suppository, or tablet.

Synthetic Oxytocin - a drug, such as Pitocin, which is given through an IV to bring on and strengthen uterine contractions.

Amniotomy - or AROM, is the artificial rupturing of membranes, commonly called "breaking the water" can make contractions stronger if labor has already begun.

Bishop Score - a scoring system physicians use to determine whether or not your cervix is favorable for induction. It ranges from 0-13 and at least a score of 6 is required before induction can take place.

Induction poses an increased risk of:

- Stress on baby which results in changes in the fetal heart rate
- Pain for mother
- Umbilical cord problems
- Infection in the mother or baby
- Baby born prematurely
- Baby needing intensive care
- Uterine rupture
- Increased risk of cesarean birth

Reasons you might be induced:

- You're showing few signs of labor by 42 confirmed weeks of pregnancy
- You have a medical disease that is not responding to treatment
- You have certain medical conditions such as preeclampsia
- Your labor isn't starting on its own after your water breaks and you have a Group B Strep positive culture
- You have a uterine infection
- Your baby's growth has been slow for his or her age

NOT Reasons to Induce:

- Controlling timing of the birth to plan around holidays, vacations, relatives visiting from out of town
- Controlling the timing of the birth to match with the doctor's schedule
- Ending the discomfort associated with full-term pregnancy
- Worry that baby is growing too large

Ask Your Provider:

- Is there a medical reason to induce labor?
- Are there non-medical alternatives I can try to speed labor along?
- Am I in immediate danger if I don't go into labor now?
- Is my baby in immediate danger if I don't go into labor now?
- How ready is my body for induction? (Ask about your Bishop score)
- What does the research say about the risks for induction?
- Do I need to make a decision now or can I wait?

NATURAL INDUCTION METHODS

First things first, induction is induction. Whether you're medically or naturally trying to stimulate labor, you can become more susceptible to further interventions and complications. Don't take any form of induction lightly.

**Always weigh the pros and cons with your care provider before trying anything at home. **



Ways to Bring on Labor Naturally:

- Sex
- Relaxation/Visualization+
- Acupuncture*
- Acupressure*+
- Chiropractor*
- Evening Primrose Oil (EPO)
- Nipple Stimulation+
- Castor Oil
- Raspberry Leaf and other herbs*+
- Spicy Food/Curry
- Induction Massage*+
- Homeopathy*+
- Eat Date Fruit

*Make sure all professionals are qualified to do prenatal care.

+ Can be used as either induction or augmentation.

Remember:

- Get as much rest as you can at night; treat natural induction like early labor and make rest a priority.
- Walk both during contractions and as exercise during pregnancy.
- Stairs are a great way to help baby get into a good position and get labor going.
- Use gravity! Upright positions help baby move down and work with your contractions.
- Keep yourself busy: Plan some fun, but restful, things to do in your last weeks of pregnancy. Take your mind off the anticipation of labor.
- BABY WILL COME WHEN BABY IS READY. If there are no signs or symptoms of a medical problem, let baby choose his/her birthdate.



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