

Induction of labour: methods used

Methods of induction of labour

There are different ways in which you can be induced available at Liverpool Women's Hospital. The different options available to you depend on which methods are safest for both you and your baby.

The **first step** of induction of labour is to soften your cervix so that your waters can be broken. This is also known as artificial rupture of membranes or ARM. You may hear that term used during your induction process.

“ You are now able to have your water broken or ARM”.

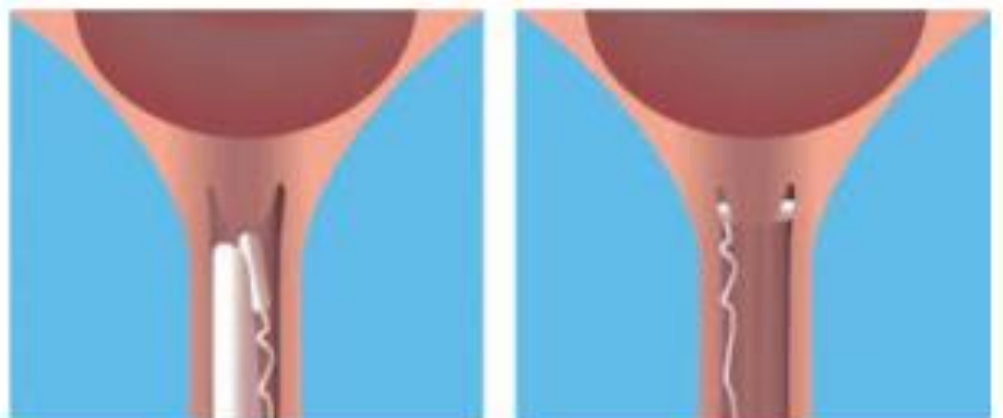
Two types of induction to soften (or ripen) your cervix to make it possible to break your water:

1. Pharmaceutical (using drugs)
2. Non-pharmaceutical (using cervical ripening balloons CRB)

Pharmaceutical (using drugs) methods of induction

Proppess pessary:

A vaginal examination is needed to place prostaglandin in the form of a pessary close to the neck of the womb.



The pessary will release a small amount of the hormone each hour into the cervix to encourage it to soften and thin. The pessary will stay in place for 24 hours and we will monitor both you and the baby every 6 hours during this time if you are an inpatient induction. If you are an outpatient induction or inpatient induction we will ask that you inform your midwife if you start to have pain, your waters break, you have any bleeding or if you are concerned that your baby is not moving normally.

During this first 24 hours, you are welcome to move around off the ward and we advise that you eat and drink regularly. This will help provide you with the energy and hydration required the following day for labour.

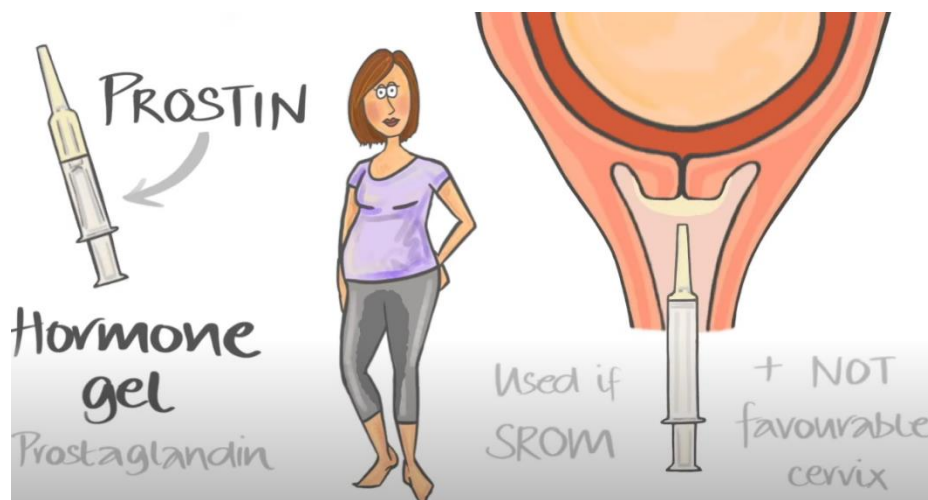
If the pessary falls out, please let your midwife know.

Occasionally, the cervix takes less time to ripen and the pessary can be removed earlier. If this happens, we will transfer you to Delivery Suite at the next available time so that you can continue with your induction.

A very small number of those undertaking induction will have very frequent contractions and will need to have the Pessary removed before 24 hours. This is called hyperstimulation and has the potential to cause adverse effects for you and your baby. You may also require another medication called Terbutaline, given as an injection, to stop contractions.

Prostin gel:

Prostin gel is a prostaglandin gel which is sometimes used when your membranes have ruptured (“waters have gone”) and your cervix remains “unfavourable”. Meaning not soft, shortened or thinned out (effaced).



Prostin Gel is inserted into your vagina and around your cervix with the aim of softening and effacing the cervix. Its effects are noted after 6 hours.

Prostin Gel can be used when you have already had the Propess pessary in place for 24 hours and your cervix remains unfavourable, and we are unable to break your waters.

Non- Pharmaceutical (using a cervical ripening balloon) methods of induction

Cook Balloon or Foley Catheter – cervical ripening balloon (CRB)

Sometimes there is a recommendation to have a non-pharmaceutical method of induction. This can be because there is a history of a previous birth by caesarean section, previous history of surgery on your uterus or sometimes if you have had 4 or more babies born. It can also be considered for all other inductions including inpatient and outpatient induction of labour. This will be discussed with you prior to attending for your induction with your consultant obstetrician or midwife.

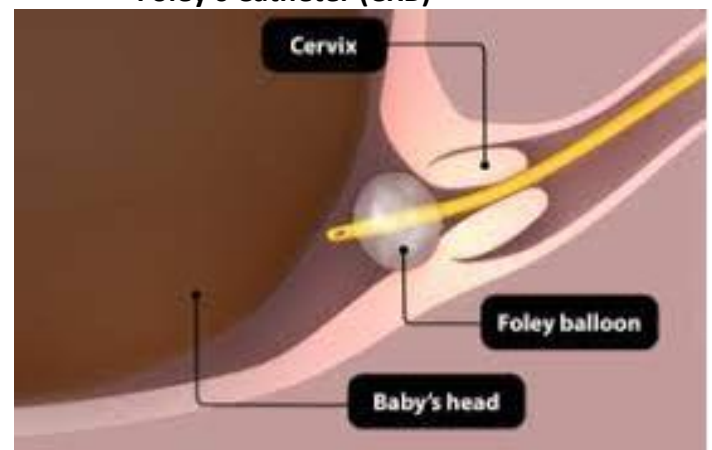
What is Induction of labour with a CRB? Induction of labour (IOL) is a process used to safely start labour artificially. On admission the balloon is inserted into the cervical canal (neck of the womb) during an internal examination by the Doctor or Midwife.

When using the Cook's Catheter, the first of the two balloons (balloon 1) is inflated with a safe liquid called 'normal saline' on the uterine side of the cervix and the second (balloon 2) is then inflated in the vaginal side of the cervix. Similarly, the Foley catheter is inserted into the cervical canal (or the neck of the womb) during vaginal examination. Once in place the balloon will be inflated the uterine side of the cervix. See image below.

Cook's Catheter (CRB)



Foley's Catheter (CRB)



The two balloons of the Cook's Catheter or singular balloon of the Foley catheter then adapt to the contour of the cervical canal to minimise discomfort. When the catheter is removed, the cervix will be assessed for dilatation (opening of the cervix) and

based on the findings a plan will be made with you regarding the next stage of the induction of labour.

The CRB is made to dilate the cervix naturally and gradually and may help start labour. Ripening and dilation works by the balloon's gentle and constant pressure. This allows pressure from the balloon to ripen the cervix.

As the CRB does NOT contain any medication, it reduces the risk of side effects. Once inserted the CRB will usually stay there for 12-18 hours. It can be easily removed should it need to be taken out before this time.

What are the benefits of the CRB?

The CRB safely softens and opens the cervix without the use of medications, and therefore reduces potential side effects. The silicone balloon adapts to the individual shape of the cervical canal. The balloon is easily inserted and removed.

What happens 12 hours after the CRB is inserted? The CRB will be deflated before being removed. Another internal assessment will be undertaken to assess if your waters can be broken. When a delivery bed becomes available you will be transferred for your waters to be broken and you will continue onto the **second step** of your induction. Another internal examination maybe required by a midwife or doctor if your waters cannot be broken, and the findings and plan of care will be discussed with you. You may at this time, have a conversation with the doctor and may be offered the **Prostin Gel** or a caesarean section.

Outpatient induction of labour – methods of induction

If you have chosen to have an outpatient induction of labour the options available to you for the **first step** of induction :

Propess pessary

Cook's Balloon or Foley Catheter – cervical ripening balloon (CRB)