



# Important Patient Information on

## Induction of Labour

### Induction of Labour

Waiting for the birth of a baby can be both an exciting and anxious time. Most women give birth within 2 weeks before or after the due date. For most women labour will begin naturally, but for some it may be medically necessary to help start labour. For some women, the decision to induce labour may require going to a different hospital for labour and birth.

Your doctor will recommend that labour be induced when the risks of continuing pregnancy are more serious than the risks of having the baby right away. The risks and benefits of inducing labour will depend on the reason your labour is being induced. Discuss this with your doctor.

### Some reasons why labour is induced:

- ◆ The pregnancy has gone more than one week past the due date (over 41 weeks).
- ◆ The baby is small and growing too slow.
- ◆ The bag of water has broken and labour has not started.
- ◆ The mother has an illness, such as high blood pressure or kidney disease, that threatens her health or the health of the baby.

## Ways of inducing labour:

These are some of the ways labour can be induced.

- ◆ Breaking the bag of waters that surround the baby. This is done during a vaginal examination.
- ◆ Putting a small tube (catheter) into the cervix to soften it and cause contractions to begin.
- ◆ Putting a medicated gel or a suppository containing the hormone prostaglandin into the vagina or cervix. This will help soften the cervix and may start contractions. This can also be done to soften the cervix before using the medication oxytocin.
- ◆ Giving a medication called oxytocin by intravenous drip.

## How will an induction of labour affect my baby and me?

Both you and your baby will be watched closely. Your baby's heartbeat will be checked often. And your contractions will be watched to be sure that they are not coming too close together or lasting too long. A machine called a fetal monitor may be used to check the baby's heartbeat and your contractions during labour.

## How can I cope with pain, when labour is induced?

As with natural labour you will have more pain as your contractions become harder and last longer. You will be able to use all the same ways to control pain as women who have their labour start naturally. Partner support and techniques such as relaxation and breathing patterns learned in childbirth classes or coached by your nurse or midwife will help you cope.

## Instructions:

Prepare for having your baby when you are being induced as you would for natural labour.

### Your induction is booked for:

Date:

Hospital:

Phone:

- The hospital will phone you and tell you when to come for your induction.
- You are to call the hospital for specific instructions.
- Other:

## THE TOP PROGRAM

Arising out of the 2003 Master Agreement, TOP succeeds the former Alberta Clinical Practice Guidelines program, and maintains and distributes Alberta CPGs. TOP is a health quality improvement initiative that fits within the broader health system focus on quality and complements other strategies such as Primary Care Initiative and the Physician Office System Program.

The TOP program supports physician practices, and the teams they work with, by fostering the use of evidence-based best practices and quality initiatives in medical care in Alberta. The program offers a variety of tools and out-reach services to help physicians and their colleagues meet the challenge of keeping practices current in an environment of continually emerging evidence.

This brochure was developed by the Committee on Reproductive Care of the Alberta Medical Association and the TOP Program.

A version of this pamphlet is available on the TOP web site: [www.topalbertadoctors.org](http://www.topalbertadoctors.org)



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