

My induction of labour appointment:

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Contact: _____

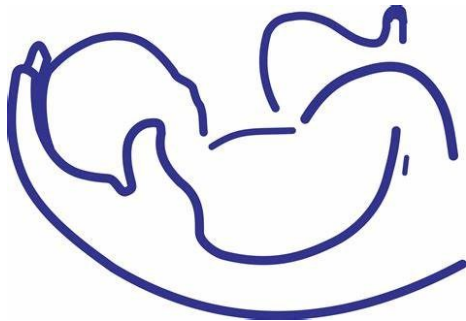
Phone back at this time: _____

My return appointment:

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Contact: _____



Scan the QR code for more information about induction of labour on our website.

Induction of labour: Useful information

What is induction of labour (IOL)?

Most women go into labour naturally. Sometimes, we may recommend starting your labour — this is known as induction of labour. In NHS Lothian, between 25 and 30% of pregnant people are offered induction. You may be offered IOL if:

- Your pregnancy has continued beyond 41 weeks
- There are medical concerns for you or your baby
- Your waters break but you do not go into labour.

How is labour induced?

IOL aims to mimic the natural process of labour. It can be broken down into three stages:

1. Ripening your cervix: Membrane sweeps, a cervical ripening balloon or vaginal prostaglandins may be offered to help ripen your cervix.
2. Breaking your waters: We will offer to break your waters using a small hook.
3. Starting or boosting contractions: We may offer a hormone drip (syntocinon) to help start or boost your contractions.

Where will I have my IOL?

We make use of both the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and St John's Hospital, Livingston, sites to offer IOL. You will be offered an appointment at one of these sites, on either an inpatient (you stay in hospital for the whole IOL process) or outpatient (you go home for the first part of your IOL) basis.

How long will IOL take?

The safety of you and your baby is our most important consideration during induction. The process can take some time because:

- You may have to wait for a bed in the hospital before your induction can be started
- The process of ripening your cervix can take up to five days, and, occasionally, it may not work

- There is sometimes a delay before your waters can be broken. This is because we recommend monitoring you and your baby more closely on the Labour Ward and you may need to wait for a place to become available.
- There are sometimes delays within the system. We always prioritise our workload based on medical needs which may mean there are others arriving at the unit needing urgent care. If either of our sites is particularly busy, we may offer you the option of moving to the other site to continue your IOL.

Can I decline IOL?

It is important that you take time to ask about your options and to discuss your personal and medical circumstances. The decision to have an induction or to wait is yours and will be respected.

If you choose not to be induced when it is recommended, you should let your midwife or obstetrician know. You will be invited to attend a clinic or hospital for monitoring to check how you and your baby are. The monitoring is offered to provide you with information on how your baby is at the moment and may help you make a decision on options for birth.



What happens once the IOL process starts?

We will monitor you and your baby closely throughout the induction process. While you are waiting for your labour to establish, we would encourage you to:

Stay mobile: Walking, dancing, squatting and using a birth ball all help to keep you upright and active which can help your labour to establish.

Eat and drink: In the early stages of IOL you should try to eat and drink as normal to give you energy for labour. Healthy snacks such as dried fruit, cereal bars or flapjacks, and isotonic drinks sports drinks can all help you to keep your energy levels up.

Keep comfortable: Ask your midwife about different types of pain relief you can use at home and in the hospital.

What should I bring with me to the hospital?

Pack clothes and footwear you feel comfortable in, as well as any wash items you may want. The induction process can take a while, so bring something to pass the time—books, magazines and card games are all popular. You can bring your mobile phone and other electronic equipment to the hospital, although the hospital takes no responsibility for their safety if you leave them unattended. We do ask that you use headphones when listening to devices, and only make phonecalls at reasonable hours to allow others on the ward to rest. You should also bring some items for your baby such as clothes and nappies.

We will provide you with meals and drinks whilst you are in the wards. You can also visit the shops and cafes at the hospital sites. Unfortunately we do not have facilities to store or reheat food on the wards.

What about my birth partner?

One birth partner is welcome to stay with you throughout the induction process, however we are unable to provide a bed or meals for them. We ask that your birth partner does not share your bed as there are safe weight limits for each bed which may cause it to break, and sharing your bedspace in hospital can increase your chance of developing an infection. Please ask your birth partner to update your family and friends on how you are, as staff cannot disclose confidential information over the phone.