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Induction – Cervical Catheter Balloon



Patient information

Induction of Labour with a Cervical Catheter Balloon (Foley's Catheter)



What is balloon Induction?

Balloon induction is a mechanical form of labour induction. Mechanical methods of induction have the least chance of over stimulating the uterus and causing too many contractions.

A catheter (a soft silicone tube), which has a balloon near the tip, is inserted into the neck of the womb (cervix). When the catheter is in place, the balloon is filled with sterile water. Some of the catheter remains outside and this will be attached to your thigh with tape or a band.

The catheter stays in place for up to 24 hours and the balloon puts gentle pressure on the cervix. The pressure should help to soften and open your cervix. This will help to start labour or open your cervix enough for us to break the waters around your baby.

If you are suitable for outpatient induction of labour, you can go home with the catheter in place. We will give you a time to attend the antenatal ward for removal of the catheter 24 hours after insertion. If it falls out before this time, call the ward and we will ask you to come in for assessment.

How is the balloon catheter fitted?

We check to make sure you and your baby are fit for induction. We do this by making observations and monitoring your baby's heart rate for 20-30 minutes. If these are ok, with your consent we will complete a vaginal examination. This will allow us to assess your cervix in preparation for the balloon to be inserted.

We may use an instrument called a speculum in the vaginal to help with the insertion. [picture]

We will insert the catheter through the cervix and gently fill the balloon with water to apply pressure to the internal wall of the cervix. Gas and air can be provided during the procedure for pain relief, please ask.

How long does it take?

The insertion of the balloon catheter takes approximately three to five minutes. It can stay in place for 24 hours, then we will remove it. At that point, it should be possible to break your waters.

Are there any risks or complications?

Inserting the balloon into the cervix can be uncomfortable, but not normally painful. There is a small risk of infection, and if we suspect this, we will re-assess you and change your care plan in discussion with you.

Going home after insertion of the Balloon Catheter

When you're at home you can do things as you would normally, for example, showering, bathing or walking. You must avoid sexual interaction.

After going to the toilet, wash your hands and ensure the catheter is clean.

Call Maternity Triage on 01923 217364 if:

- you have bleeding,
- you have contractions,
- you have concerns about baby's movements,
- you feel unwell,
- the waters around baby break,
- the balloon falls out,

A midwife will talk to you and tell you what you need to do.

How to contact us**Women's and Children's Division****Maternity**

[Watford General Hospital](#)

Vicarage Road

Watford

Hertfordshire WD18 0HB

Hospital switchboard: 01923 244366

PALS

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Language



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Concerns, complaints or suggestions

If you are unhappy with your experience or would like to give feedback, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). PALS is available to patients, relatives, carers and friends to raise concerns.

For more information, please scan the QR code or visit our [website](#).

Department	Maternity
Ratified / review date	July 2025 / July 2028
ID number	33/2430/V1