

Information for women who are given Propess for induction of labour

You have been admitted for induction of labour. Before we can break your waters and start a hormone drip to induce your labour, your cervix (neck of womb) needs to be open. If the cervix is not open, a hormone called Propess is used. This is put into the vagina in the form of a pessary (a capsule that dissolves).

What happens when your cervix needs to be ripened?

On admission to the Maternity Unit your baby's heartbeat will be monitored for 30 minutes. The midwife will then ask your permission to perform a vaginal examination to see if your cervix has opened up since your induction was booked. If it is not, we will encourage the cervix to open and soften using the Propess pessary.

The pessary looks like a very small tampon and is inserted into the vagina. It contains a hormone called Prostaglandin, which is released slowly over 24 hours to soften and open your cervix.

Once inserted into your vagina, the pessary will stay there for 24 hours. There is a string attached to the pessary to allow the midwife or doctor to remove it easily. The string will be placed inside your vagina.

What you need to be aware of once the pessary is in place

After the pessary has been inserted you will be asked to lie down on your side for 30 minutes. This allows the pessary to absorb moisture from your vagina, which will make the pessary swell and prevent it from falling out. Following this, you may move around and eat and drink as normal. Some women will be offered the opportunity to go home, but some will need to stay in the Maternity Unit. The midwife will discuss this with you. The midwife will check your blood pressure and pulse and listen to the baby's heartbeat every 4 hours.

If the string from the pessary comes out of your vagina, you must be careful not to pull or drag on it, as this may cause accidental removal of the pessary.

Please take special care

- When wiping yourself after going to the toilet.
- After washing yourself.
- Getting on and off the bed.

In the unlikely event that the pessary should come out, please inform the midwife immediately. The pessary will need to be reinserted.

Inform the midwife if:

- You experience regular contractions (1 contraction in every 5 minutes).
- Your waters break.
- You are worried.

If labour should start, the pessary will be removed when your cervix is at least 3cms dilated.

Hyperstimulation of the uterus

On rare occasions Propess may cause your uterus to contract too frequently. If this happens your baby's heartbeat will be monitored and you will be examined by a midwife or doctor. It may be necessary to remove the pessary. The doctor will discuss this with you. In some cases it may be then necessary to deliver your baby by Caesarean section.

What happens 24 hours after the pessary is inserted?

The midwife will examine you internally, with your permission. If your cervix is open, your waters will be broken and a hormone drip to stimulate your contractions will be started. This is usually done after you have been transferred to the delivery suite when a midwife is available however in some circumstances it is possible to break your waters on the Induction Suite or Birth Centre. Please speak to your midwife about which is best for you. We aim to break your waters after you have had the pessary for 24 hours however please be aware that if the unit is extremely busy this may be delayed.

Once your waters have been broken it is usual to start the hormone drip to encourage your contractions to start, this can only be done on the delivery suite. For some women it may be appropriate to wait for 2-4 hours to see if their contractions start without the hormone drip. The midwife will talk to you about whether this is appropriate for you.

If your cervix is not open the midwife will discuss further treatment options with you, including insertion of a second Propess pessary. This decision will be based on your medical history, the reason for and timing of your induction, and your wishes.

Further information for women who go home following Propress

You are able to go home if you have no additional complications and have your own transport available. It is important that a responsible adult will be with you at home at all times

Please make sure that the hospital has your correct contact details before leaving the hospital including your phone number. The midwife will make arrangements for you to return the following day.

You must telephone the hospital if you experience any of the following:

- You start contracting
- Your waters break
- The colour of your waters changes to red or brownish green
- The baby is not moving as usual
- You feel unwell
- You have a raised temperature or flu like symptoms
- The pessary falls out
- You are worried for any reason

Contact telephone numbers

Please telephone before coming to the hospital:

Induction of labour suite: 0118 322 7825

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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