**Information for patients on induction of labour using a Coloplast balloon catheter.**

Your name and personal ID number:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Length of pregnancy: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(weeks + days)

Indication for induction: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Number of previous births: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Induction of labour**

Induction of labour endeavours to set off labour by speeding up the ripening of the cervix and stimulating the contractions. When the cervix is unripe, it may take several days before actual labour can be started by rupturing the foetal membranes and allowing your waters to break or using an oxytocin drip. The cervix can be softened either mechanically using a balloon catheter or by using drugs.

**Balloon catheter**

Mechanical cervical ripening, i.e., the so-called balloon method, has been chosen as your induction method.

Mechanical cervical ripening involves passing a catheter (tube) through the cervical canal. At the end of the catheter there is a balloon, which is filled with 30–50 ml of saline. The balloon is placed just inside the inner cervix. The catheter tube is secured by taping it to your inner thigh so that there is mild tension and, therefore, constant pressure of the balloon against the cervix, which provides mechanical pressure against the inner cervix. The pressure causes the release of the body’s own hormones (prostaglandins), which leads to the ‘ripening’ of the cervix, i.e., the cervix becomes shorter and begins to dilate. Contractions begin spontaneously in around 10 per cent of women giving birth while the balloon is in place.

The catheter can remain in place for up to 24 hours and falls out once the cervix is around 3 cm dilated.

Before the catheter is inserted, the condition of the baby is checked by recording its heart rate using CTG over a period of 20–30 minutes.

**Side effects**

Slight/minor bleeding may occur during insertion, but this is harmless. Insertion involves a gynaecological examination, but otherwise does not tend to be painful. Some people have a sensation of pressure in the lower abdomen, and some can develop what feels like period pains, particularly in the first hour following insertion. These can be most easily relieved by heat, and you can also take 1–2 paracetamol 500 mg tablets, with or without added morphine.

Once the balloon is in place, a new CTG is performed, after which you can and should move around freely.

During the period in which the balloon is in place, we strongly advise against bathing in a bath tub or swimming pool (showering is fine), and we also strongly advise against having intercourse.

The balloon is expelled spontaneously, generally within 24 hours and sometimes as soon as after a few hours.

Once the cervix is around 3 cm dilated, the catheter tends to fall out.

**Show the expelled balloon to your midwife at the Women’s Clinic.**

If the balloon has not been expelled after 24 hours, the midwife will remove it.

**For those returning home while awaiting the start of active labour**

Always call on telephone number XXX if:

* something begins to feel different
* you can no longer feel your baby move/the normal pattern of your baby’s movements changes
* you develop labour pains
* your waters break
* there is bleeding from your vagina
* you develop pain in the uterus, persistent abdominal pain, a feeling of downward pressure
* your stomach feels hard all the time
* you develop a high temperature or feel ill
* you become anxious or something feels unclear

Mention that your labour has been induced using a balloon catheter.

If the balloon has not fallen out of its own accord and your contractions have not started within 24 hours, you must come to the hospital for a check-up and to plan your continued management.

Your appointment for your next check-up:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

You should go to:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_