

Outpatient induction of labour using Propess

This leaflet can be made available
in alternative languages / formats on request.

*如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供*

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
w innych językach/formatkach.

Author: Consultant
Department: Maternity Services
Document Number: MWL1424
Version: 1
Review date: 01 / 08 / 2026

Outpatient induction will only be offered to you if you have gone past your due date and have had a 'low-risk' pregnancy.

With this leaflet, you should also receive our leaflet 'Information about having your labour induced' which explains all the induction options used at Whiston Hospital.

What happens when I arrive at the maternity unit?

When you first come to **Ward 2E** the midwife will ensure you are informed of the process and that you give your consent for the induction to take place.

You and your baby's wellbeing will be checked and a vaginal examination will be performed to see if your cervix is ripe and beginning to open.

If your cervix is not ripe, we will attempt to ripen the cervix using a pessary called Propess.

The pessary looks like a very small tampon which is inserted into the vagina. The Propess pessary contains the active ingredient dinoprostone, which is a naturally occurring female hormone also known as prostaglandin.

Once inserted into the vagina the pessary will stay there for 24 hours slowly releasing the dinoprostone to ripen your cervix.

There is a string attached to the pessary to allow us to remove it easily.

What are the benefits of using Propess rather than using Prostin gel?

The Prostin gel is inserted behind the cervix during a vaginal (internal) examination every 6 hours until labour starts. This requires that you stay in hospital to have this.

The main advantage of Propess is that you will have less vaginal (internal) examinations minimising discomfort.

Once Propess is inserted if all is well with you and your baby you can go home and await events although we do recommend that you come back to the maternity unit to birth your baby.

Are there any risks or side effects from Propess?

The risks and side effects of Propess are the same as for Prostin gel that is currently used to induce labour as the active ingredient is the same.

The following are some of the side effects that are known to be associated with this drug; it does not mean that all people using this medicine will experience these.

Possible side effects are:

- Abdominal discomfort
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Abnormally strong contractions of the womb which may cause problems with the baby's heart rate (also referred to as hyperstimulation)
- Vaginal swelling
- Discomfort / irritation.

Propess may not be appropriate for all women or for all circumstances, but this will be discussed with you before it is used.

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

After the pessary has been inserted you will be asked to lie down for 20-30 minutes. This allows the pessary to absorb moisture from your vagina, which will make the pessary swell and prevent it from falling out. Before and after the Propess has been inserted we will check your baby's wellbeing by monitoring your baby's heart rate pattern using a CTG machine. We will monitor your baby for 30 - 60 minutes after the propess is inserted.

If all is well following this, you will be asked to gently move about. Then after a short time you may go home and wait for your labour to start.

You will be given a date and time, about 24 hours after the Propess was inserted, to come back to the maternity unit for another assessment should you not go into labour spontaneously.

Please note that one of our midwives will try and make contact with you via telephone approximately every 6 hours once you are home to check upon you and your baby's wellbeing. Please note that this may show as a **NO CALLER ID** number, so please ensure you answer it and keep your telephone to hand once home.

We do recommend that once your labour starts that you come back to the maternity unit so we can support you during your labour and birth. As you have been given medication it is important that we monitor you and the baby for the possible side effects as described above.

If the string from the pessary moves to the outside of your vagina you must be careful not to pull or drag on it, as this may cause the pessary to come out. Please take special care when wiping yourself after going to the toilet, after washing and when getting on and off the bed.

In the unlikely event that the pessary should come out, please call the delivery suite triage on 0151 290 4489. The pessary may need to be reinserted by one of our midwives.

What can I do and not do at home?

You can walk about, wash (bath or shower), eat and drink and relax as you would normally do. We recommend you do not have sexual intercourse, or insert objects or medication into the vagina.

When should I call the maternity unit?

If any of the following occur please call the **delivery suite triage on 0151 290 4489 immediately** for advice:

- If you start having regular contractions
- If you start to have contractions very strongly, very quickly (more than 5 contractions in 10 minutes) or you have a continual contraction that lasts several minutes
- If you think your waters have broken (this may be a gush of fluid or a continual dribble of fluid from your vagina)
- If you are concerned about your baby's movements
- If you have continual abdominal pain
- If you have vaginal swelling or soreness
- If you feel unwell and/or have difficulty breathing and/or have vomiting or diarrhoea
- If you start bleeding vaginally
- If your Propess pessary falls out
- If you at all worried or have any questions.

Please ask to speak with a midwife; they will ask you some questions and give you advice. If there are concerns or you are labouring you will be asked to come back to the hospital where you will be assessed by a midwife.

What happens if my labour starts within 24 hours of the pessary being inserted?

Approximately 75-80% of women will have given birth within 24 hours of having Propess inserted.

If you start having regular contractions, you should call the **delivery suite triage on 0151 290 4489** for advice on when to come back in.

Please ensure that you mention to the midwife that you are being induced and have got a Propess pessary inserted.

As your labour progresses the pessary may fall out or be removed by the midwife.

You will be supported in your labour in the same way you would have been if your labour had started spontaneously. Providing you and your baby are well and your labour progresses, you will have the full range of options available to you including active, mobile labour and the birthing pool. You and your baby's wellbeing will be checked throughout labour and birth.

What happens if my labour does not start within 24 hours of the pessary being inserted?

If you have **not** started your labour within 24 hours of having Propess we would like you to return the following day about 24 hours after you had your Propess inserted (You will have been provided with a time and location for this at your initial visit when you had the Propess inserted).


Following admission, the midwife will assess you and your baby's wellbeing. The midwife or doctor will also ask to examine you internally to feel your cervix and remove the Propess pessary. If your cervix is ripe and starting to open you will be advised to have your waters broken. This this will be done once there is availability for our delivery suite to accommodate you.

It is important to note that sometimes we may not be able to accommodate breaking your waters immediately upon your return. During busy periods we may require you to wait until we feel that it is a safe time to break your waters. This is to ensure that you receive the best possible care from our team.

With your consent, the midwife or doctor will break your waters during an internal examination using a long plastic instrument with a small hook on the end using gentle pressure against the bag of membranes and may start an intravenous drip to make your contractions come. If this happens, we would recommend that your baby is monitored continuously throughout labour using a CTG (cardiotocograph) monitor.

What happens if my cervix is not ripe enough to have my waters broken?

If your cervix is not ripe the midwife or doctor will discuss further treatment with you at this time. The options or advice may be that you are given time to rest and await events, a further pessary may be inserted, another drug may be used or that you have a caesarean section. Our doctors will discuss these options with you, and depending upon individual circumstances may make recommendations as to which option may be safest for you and your baby.



Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

Twitter and Facebook
@mwlInhs
www.merseywestlancs.nhs.uk