

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

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# Foley balloon catheter Induction of Labour

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You have been provided with this patient information leaflet as you may have been offered a Foley catheter induction of labour. This is supported by The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), The World Health Organisation (WHO) and used in many other hospitals, but it is a change of practice for Sherwood Forest Hospitals.

We recommend that you also read the patient information leaflet for 'Induction of labour', which can be found in your BadgerNotes app, in the King's Mill Hospital leaflet library. This will guide you through our induction of labour process, alternative options and answer some questions you may have.

### What is a balloon induction?

Balloon induction is a mechanical method of induction of labour. A soft silicone tube, also known as a catheter, is inserted through the neck of the uterus (cervix). It has a balloon near the tip and when it is in place the balloon is filled with sterile water, through the tube via the end that remains outside the body. The catheter stays in place, inside your uterus, for up to 24 hours, with the balloon putting gentle pressure on your cervix. By applying pressure to your cervix, it helps your body release natural hormones (prostaglandin) to stimulate the start of labour by opening your cervix enough for labour to start naturally or to be able to break the waters surrounding your baby.

### What are the advantages for me being offered a Foley balloon catheter induction?

The advantages of the Foley balloon catheter induction compared to our other methods are:

- Less side effects compared to hormonal/medicated induction methods.
- Less chance of the uterus contracting too much, therefore providing a more positive experience for you and your baby.
- Medication is not required to start off the process of induction, allowing you time to rest and reducing the amount of monitoring required during your early induction process.

### What happens when the Foley balloon catheter is removed?

The Foley balloon may fall out by itself as the cervix opens or if you go into labour. Alternatively, it will be removed the next day (24 hours later) by the midwife. They will remove the water inside the balloon using a syringe at the outside of the catheter, and then gently pull it out. The midwife will then offer to perform a vaginal examination of your cervix to see if your waters can be broken.

### What if the balloon does not work?

If the cervix is not dilated enough for the balloon to be inserted or if the balloon doesn't soften the cervix enough for your waters to be broken, a plan to continue your induction process using an alternative method will be discussed with you, if appropriate. In some cases, if all methods are not successful, a Caesarean section may be necessary; your doctor will discuss this with you.

### What if I don't want a Foley balloon catheter induction?

The standard method of induction of labour (propress pessary) will continue to be available and you may choose to have this medication to open your cervix instead. For more details, please read the 'Induction of labour' leaflet, found in your Badgernotes app, within the leaflet library.

### What are the complications or risks?

The procedure can be uncomfortable, but it should not be painful. You can request the use of gas and air whilst it is being inserted. There is a small risk of infection as with any induction process or vaginal examination.

### Unlicensed use

You need to be aware that although Foley balloon catheters are widely used all around the world to induce labour, the Foley company have not sought license for this. There have been many research trials that have shown that this is a safe, effective method of induction of labour. It is a recommended method of induction from both the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

### Contact details:

- Emergency Triage Line: 01623 655722
- Sherwood Birthing Unit: 01623 672244 / 01623 676170

### Further sources of information

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

### Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service:

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email [sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net) or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office  
Leaflet code: PIL202405-01-FBC  
Created: May 2024 / Review Date: May 2026