



Patient Information Leaflet- Outpatient Induction of Labour with Dilapan Dilators (Rods)

What is Induction of Labour?

Induction of Labour means starting your labour artificially, encouraging contractions to begin, the dilation of the cervix (neck of the womb) and leading to the birth of your baby. There are many reasons why Induction of Labour (IOL) is recommended and these will be explained by a Doctor and Midwife.

Induction of labour (IOL) is a process for starting your labour artificially. It is not uncommon with more than 25 % of births in the UK being induced. The process of induction of labour is recommended when your clinician feels that inducing labour is a better option for both you and your baby than continuing with your pregnancy.

Your cervix plays a big role in determining the success of induction of labour. During pregnancy, the cervix (neck of the womb) is usually firm and stiff enough to help hold your baby in the uterus. But in the final days before delivery, the cervix starts to soften and open up to get ready for labour. If your cervix is still closed and firm, it might need some help before induction of labour is started. Your doctor may use the words “unripe” or “unfavourable.” The process of getting your cervix ready is called „cervical ripening and this is the situation where DILAPAN-S® can help you.

Why might I be offered induction of labour?

In most pregnancies labour starts naturally between 37 – 42 weeks. Induction is offered when it is felt that either the mother or the baby (or both) will benefit from an induced delivery rather than waiting for labour to start naturally.

- Induction is offered to all women who don't go into labour naturally by 42 weeks to reduce the chance of complications.
- Other reasons might be if you or your baby has a health problem.

Our doctors will explain why you are being offered an induction. We will also talk to you about the possible benefits and risks, and discuss possible alternatives to enable you to make an informed decision.

What is Outpatient Induction of Labour?

If your clinicians find your pregnancy suitable, you might be offered the choice of an outpatient induction of labour. That means you will be allowed to spend the ‘cervical ripening’ part of the induction process at home. It reduces the amount of time you need to stay in the hospital before your labour starts. You can usually spend a night at home with your family and continue with your normal daily activities.

What is Dilapan -S?

We use Dilapan rods also called dilators for Outpatient Induction of Labour. These are slim rods made of synthetic firm gel. They are inserted into the vagina by a doctor or midwife.

They do not contain any medicines or hormones. This rod expands from 4mm to max width of 15mm in 12-24 hours. Cervical ripening with Dilapan is safe for you and your baby.

This is what a Dilapan dilator looks like – from 0 (dry) to 24 (hydrated) hours



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How does Dilapan work?

The Dilapan gradually absorbs natural fluids in the cervix and expands. This dilates (opens) the cervix and encourages your body to release hormones that naturally prepare your cervix for labour.

After 12- 15hours after insertion (maximal insertion time is 24 hours) the rods are removed and a repeat vaginal examination is performed. Most of the time your clinician is able to break your waters now.

In 90 % of women the cervix opens to at least 2 to 3cm after the first set of rods.

What are the risks?

- The Dilapan might cause discomfort or bleeding on insertion.

What are the benefits?

- Dilapan does not contain any drugs or hormones which mean you have no chance of over stimulating your womb.
- It is safe to be used for women who have previously had a caesarean section.
 - There is less chance of getting uterine contractions during the cervical ripening and hence there is less requirement for pain killers
 - You can relax /sleep during this process of Outpatient IOL
 - You can have a shower or go for a walk

What should I not do?

- Under no circumstances you should attempt to remove Dilapan-S yourself.
- Avoid bath, vaginal douching and sexual intercourse while Dilapan-S is in place

What should I expect?

- The Doctor/Midwife will ask to perform a speculum examination to gently insert the Dilapan rods. This may briefly be a bit uncomfortable and there might be a little bit of bleeding.
- The procedure usually takes about 5 – 10 minutes.
- Your baby's heartbeat will be monitored after the rods are inserted as routine.
- Once your cervix has dilated (usually within 12-24hrs) we will be able to remove the Dilapan, break your waters and your labour will start; either on its own or we will start a hormone drip to give you contractions.

What do I need to do on the day of my induction?

- You need to phone Maternity Assessment Centre (MAC), 0121 4247055 at around 7pm on the day your induction is booked to discuss when to arrive at the Maternity Unit.
- When you are asked to come in you are welcome to bring one birthing partner with you. Please ask a Midwife for other visiting times.
- You may go home to rest for 12-24 hours after your Dilapan is inserted.
- You will be given a time to call for the next day.
- It is also possible that your induction could be postponed if another mother has a greater need at any point during your admission. This is to ensure the safety of all mothers and babies on the unit.

You will return to the hospital the next day at a timeframe usually 12-15 hours following the insertion of the rods. The date and time will be specified by the Midwife. You will be asked to attend either Ward 5 at Good Hope Hospital or Labour Ward at Heartlands Hospital. When you arrive, you will be admitted, the rods will be removed and your waters will be broken (artificial

rupture of membranes, ARM) either at the same time or within 4 hours following the removal of the rods, depending on activity on the labour ward. Sometimes you may have to wait longer for the ARM if Labour ward is very busy.

When should I call the Labour Ward or Triage?

- If you experience regular contractions
- If you are worried about baby's movements
- If your waters break
- If the Dilapan dilators falls out. Please remember to bring the expelled (fallen out) dilator/dilators. If unable to take out the dilator fallen in the toilet, try and take a picture of the dilator if possible.
- If you experience any bleeding or pain
- If you are worried
- After your Dilapan has been inserted for 12-24 hours

If labour starts, the Dilapan may be removed earlier than 12 hours by a Midwife

What if my cervix has not changed after the Dilapan rods have been in place for 12-24 hours?

If there has been no change in your cervix i.e. – if the cervix is not opened enough to break the waters easily, the Doctor or Midwife will discuss further options with you. These may include:

- A Second round of Dilapan, possibly after a break of between 12 and 24 hours
- Prostaglandin vaginal pessaries – drugs which act like your natural hormones to encourage labour
- A Caesarean Section.

Contact details

Maternity Assessment Centre, Good Hope Hospital - 0121 4247055, 0121 4247057

Ward 5, Good Hope Hospital – 0121 4247205, 0121 4249205

Labour Ward, Good Hope Hospital - 0121 4247201, 0121 4249201

Heartlands Hospital – 0121 4243514, 0121 4242710

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