Saskatchewan Health Authority

Misoprostol

Cervical Ripening for Induction of Labour

Cervical ripening is the process of softening and opening the cervix so your body can get ready for labour. Misoprostol is a medication used to soften the cervix and help start labour contractions. It is a safe and effective option for induction of labour.

How is Misoprostol Given?

Misoprostol can be given in two ways:

- As a pill that you swallow. Swallow it right away before it dissolves (falls apart) in your mouth.
- By placing the pill in the vagina. This is done by your healthcare provider.

What to Expect

- Your healthcare provider will explain:
  - Why misoprostol is recommended
  - The risk factors and benefits
  - Ask for your consent before starting the medication
- You will stay in the hospital while this medication is being used so your baby can be monitored.
- It may take several hours or sometimes more than a day to start labour.

What Monitoring Do I Need?

- Your baby's heart rate will be monitored for 30 minutes before starting the medication.
- Your blood pressure, pulse and temperature will also be checked.
- After taking misoprostol, your baby's heart rate and any contractions will be monitored for 30 minutes.
- If you and your baby are well and you are not in active labour, your healthcare team may decide you are OK to walk around.
- While in the hospital, you can do regular activities, eat regular meals, and shower. Remember to rest.

Possible Side Effects

- Nausea or Vomiting (throwing up)
- Diarrhea (loose or watery poop)
- Fever
- Chills
- Very frequent or strong contractions
- Changes in your baby's heart rate
- Uterine rupture (tear in the uterus) if you have had a previous cesarean birth or major uterine surgery
- Signs of an allergic reaction may happen

Tell Your Healthcare Team If:

- You have constant or very strong pain
- Contractions every 5 minutes or less or last for a very long time
- You have bright red vaginal bleeding or clots
- A sudden gush of fluid
- Your baby is moving less than normal
- You have concerns and are not sure what to do

Pain Management

- Changing positions or walking
- Taking a warm bath or shower
- Massage from your partner or support person
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) may help with mild cramping.
- Nitrous oxide (laughing gas) or other medication if needed

➢ Talk to your healthcare team about what options are available.

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