Maternity Information Leaflet

Going Home with Propess

Western Sussex Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust
Information for you about inducing your labour with Propess and going home during the process

Outpatient induction will only be offered to you if you have gone past your due date and have had a normal ‘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 Worthing and St Richards.

What happens when I arrive at the maternity unit?

When you first come to the Maternity unit (Bramber Ward at Worthing and Tangmere Ward at St Richards) 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. The string will be placed inside the vagina.
What are the benefits of using Propess rather than using Prostin tablets or gel?

The Prostin tablets or gel are inserted behind the cervix during a vaginal (internal) examination every 6 hours until labour starts.

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 & 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 for Prostin tablets/gel that we also use 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, vaginal swelling and 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 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 its heart rate pattern using a CTG machine. After about 30-40 minutes if all is well you will be ask 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.

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 & when getting on & off the bed.

In the unlikely event that the pessary should come out, please call the phone numbers you have been given immediately. The pessary will need to be reinserted.

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 maternity unit immediately for advice (phone numbers on page 7):

- 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 maternity unit 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 then we advise you to call the maternity unit to be advised on when to come back in. 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 as you would have had you 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 as through all labours.

**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 to the maternity unit (you will be informed of where to go at your initial appointment) the following day about 24 hours after you had your Propess inserted.

Please phone Labour Ward before going in to confirm the return time.

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. With your consent, the midwife or doctor will break your waters during an internal examination using a long slim 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 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.
Further information:

NHS Choices Website — www.nhs.uk

National Institute for Clinical Excellence — www.nice.org.uk

PHONE NUMBER TO CALL WHEN YOU ARE HOME AND WANT TO TALK TO A MIDWIFE:

Worthing Hospital Triage: 01903 285230

St Richards Hospital Triage: 01243 831433
Contact details:

St Richard’s Hospital, Spitalfield Lane, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 6SE

Labour ward: 01243 831433
Antenatal Clinic: 01243 788122 ext. 2871

Worthing Hospital, Lyndhurst Road, Worthing West Sussex, BN11 2DH

Labour Ward: 01903 285138
Antenatal Clinic: 01903 205111 ext. 4371

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