



# Cervical ripening balloon catheter

## Information to help you prepare for your induction

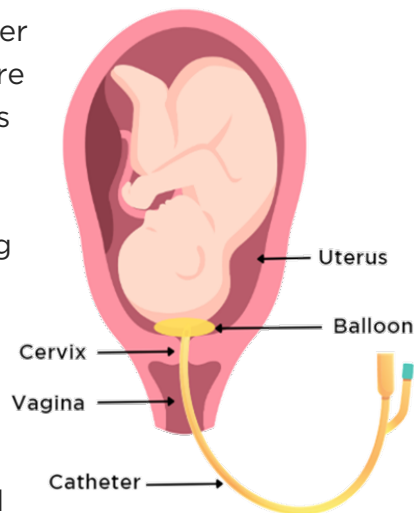
You have a balloon catheter in your cervix. Here's what you need to know.

### What is a balloon catheter?

A balloon catheter is a soft tube with a small balloon at the end.

This tube was inserted through your vagina and into your cervix. The balloon was then filled with sterile water.

The balloon catheter puts gentle pressure on your cervix. This will help to open, soften and shorten your cervix, making it easier for the midwife or doctor to break the sac of water around your baby. This step will start the next stage of your induction of labour.



- your labour starts, and your contractions get stronger and closer together
- your waters break or you notice fluid leaking from your vagina (any colour)
- your baby's movements feel different - they're moving less or not at all
- your balloon catheter falls out - this can happen when your cervix opens quickly
- you feel worried or have concerns about you or your baby.

### Who to contact

Call these numbers to talk directly to a midwife. They will ask you some questions, help you make a plan, and see if you need to return to hospital sooner than planned. They can also give you advice over the phone.

#### Assessment Centre Midwife

Tel: (03) 8345 3635

You can call any time, day or night.

#### Induction of Labour Midwife

Tel: 0466 809 742

Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4pm

**Call 000 for an ambulance right away if you have an emergency.**

### What to expect afterwards

You may experience these normal symptoms after the balloon catheter is put in:

- period-like cramps
- pressure or 'heaviness' in your vagina
- a small amount of blood mixed with thick mucus
- light bleeding or spotting.

### What to look out for

Call us or return to the hospital if you have any of the following:

- bad pain or increased discomfort
- fresh bleeding from your vagina
- problems passing urine (doing a wee)

### Your planned return to hospital

Your balloon catheter was inserted at \_\_\_\_\_ (am/pm) on \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_.

It can stay in for \_\_\_\_\_ hours.

Please come back to the hospital at \_\_\_\_\_ (am/pm) on \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ , or sooner if we call you or you have any of the symptoms listed in the **What to look out for** section.

## Tips for at home

- Once the balloon catheter is in place, the end of the catheter will be taped to your leg. This allows you to:
  - move around as usual
  - pass urine or wee as usual
  - wear underwear and clothes.
- Think of this time at home with the balloon catheter as early labour.
- Try to sleep at night. Sleeping on your side with a pillow between your knees might be more comfortable.
- Eat and drink as you normally would.
- Use heat packs on your back or lower belly for cramps.
- Take a warm shower but avoid having a bath.
- You can take paracetamol if you weren't given any in the last 6 hours in hospital.

## Once you're back in the hospital

When you arrive at the hospital, please go to Admissions window in Women's Emergency Care (WEC), on lower ground. Staff there will tell you where to go.

We usually aim to remove your balloon catheter in the birth centre, but if the birth centre is very busy, it might be done in another part of the hospital.

Removing the balloon catheter doesn't hurt. We deflate the balloon and take the tube out of your vagina.

After we remove the balloon catheter, a midwife or doctor will check inside your vagina to see if your cervix is ready for your waters to be broken. This procedure is called artificial rupture of membranes or ARM.

We will start your induction of labour within a few hours of your arrival, unless the birth centre is very busy.

If there is a delay, we will start your induction as soon as it's safe for you and your baby.

## What if the balloon catheter doesn't open the cervix enough?

About 1 in every 5 people (20%) find the balloon catheter doesn't open their cervix enough to move on to the next step of their induction of labour.

If this happens, your doctor and midwife will work with you to plan the next steps. This could include trying another method to prepare your cervix for labour (cervical priming) or having a caesarean section.

## Do you need an interpreter?



You can ask for an interpreter if you need one.

## Family Violence Support

### 1800 Respect National Helpline

You can get help if you have experienced sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

You can call any time of day or night.

1800 737 732

[1800respect.org.au](https://www.1800respect.org.au)