

Membrane Sweep

Maternity

Introduction

If you and your midwife or doctor decide that it might be appropriate to induce your labour, you will usually be offered an internal (vaginal) examination. The midwife or doctor will feel inside your vagina to check whether your cervix is softening and beginning to open. They will also be able to feel if your baby's head is high or low. This will help the doctor or midwife assess how likely it is that an induction of labour will work. It may also help estimate whether it will take a long time or be relatively quick for the induction to work.

The sweeping movement that the midwife or doctor makes with their fingers may cause some discomfort, pain and light bleeding but increases the chances of you going into labour naturally. It will not cause any harm to you or your baby. The midwife or the doctor should be able to describe what they find to you, so you can prepare yourself for what is likely to happen.

When will I be offered a membrane sweep?

Membrane sweeps are usually offered between 40 and 42 weeks, and can be repeated if you wish, in order to increase your chances of starting labour naturally. Sweeps can be performed in the maternity unit and also in the community by the community midwives.

Membrane sweeps can be offered earlier from 37 weeks if a vaginal examination is required, dependant on women's' individual care needs. Also if you require an induction of labour once a date has been agreed with you and the doctor or midwife you may be offered a membrane sweep during that clinical assessment and then invited back to our Maternity Induction Unit for further membrane sweeps.

What is the benefit of having a membrane sweep?

The benefits of a membrane sweep is that it may reduce the chance that you need to have your labour induced. This is because the process releases a hormone called prostaglandin, which is involved in the starting of labour. If the membrane sweep is successful you may go into labour within 48 hours.

Having two or even three membrane sweeps 48 hours apart is the most successful in encouraging labour to start. Therefore you may be allocated an appointment to the membrane sweep clinic within our maternity induction unit Ward D17 (Tel: 01902 694038). Or if you are low risk you will be invited into the midwifery led unit (MLU) Ward D11 (Tel: 01902 695033).

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- **Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available**
- **If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111**
- **Keep the environment clean and tidy**
- **Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.**

Membrane sweeps for women booked for induction of labour at 40 weeks and 10 days postdates may be offered and performed by your community midwife, within the community setting.

What should I expect during this appointment?

The midwife will ask about your baby's movements and feel your tummy to check which way your baby is lying, then she will listen to your baby's heartbeat. The midwife will then perform the membrane sweep, followed by listening to your baby's heartbeat again. The midwife will then explain her findings to you and if necessary, make another appointment for a follow-up membrane sweep. You will then be free to go home.

What should I expect to happen following the membrane sweep?

Following the membrane sweep, you may experience a 'show': this is a mucousy discharge that may contain some blood.

You may experience some tummy discomfort. It is safe to take two paracetamol and a warm bath may help with this discomfort.

You may go into labour.

If you feel labour is beginning or you have any concerns, contact our triage unit (Tel: 01902 695030), or midwifery led unit if you are low risk (Tel: 01902 695033).

What happens if I do not go into labour following one or more membrane sweeps?

If the membrane sweeps do not start your labour, please attend your induction of labour appointment that has been pre-arrange. On the day of your planned induction of labour please ring our maternity induction unit on 01902 694038 between 7am - 8am – to receive your admission time.

(Further reading: The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust – Induction of labour, patient leaflet)

Reference

Routine antenatal care for the healthy pregnant women' available from www.nice.org.uk/CG062

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。