

This instruction is intended for our patients who are in a care relationship

The Wellbeing Services County of Southwest Finland

Turku University Hospital

Induction of labour with a balloon catheter

Mechanical cervical ripening

A balloon catheter is a drug-free method for ripening the cervix: it expands and dilates the cervix mechanically. The catheter is inserted during vaginal examination, and the balloon at the tip of the catheter is filled with liquid.

Most patients are discharged after the catheter has been inserted, and a midwife will give you a call between 5 and 7 pm on the same day. (If you have not been contacted by 7 pm, you can call the prenatal observation ward, 02 313 1312.) If the labour does not start within 24 hours, the catheter is removed and the induction is continued using other methods, depending on the status of the cervix. In most cases, the balloon catheter causes contractions to occur, and if necessary, you can take paracetamol 500 mg – 1 g three times (maximum 3 g per day) at home.

You have a:

___ Single balloon catheter: this catheter has a single, saline-filled balloon at its tip, which has been inserted into the lower uterine segment, against the cervix. The catheter has been taped on the inside of your thigh. This makes the catheter taut, and you can adjust it.

___ Double balloon catheter: this catheter has two separate, saline-filled balloons at its tip. It is inserted so that one of the balloons is in the lower uterine segment, against the cervix, and the other is in the cervical canal, also against the cervix.

Come to the labour and pregnancy emergency unit (Lighthouse hospital, 3rd floor) if:

- the baby's movements have decreased noticeably or if you cannot feel the movements at all
- you experience heavy vaginal bleeding
- you have continuous lower abdominal pain
- you have a fever of over 38°C
- you suspect your waters have broken
- you have regular and painful contractions that you cannot manage adequately at home

When the catheter comes out:

1. If the balloon catheter comes out, come to the labour and pregnancy emergency unit (Lighthouse hospital, 3rd floor). A doctor assesses the cervix at the hospital and makes a follow-up plan.
2. If the balloon catheter has not come out by morning, come to the labour and pregnancy emergency unit (Lighthouse hospital, 3rd floor) according to the instructions you have received. A doctor assesses the cervix and makes a follow-up plan.