

Serenity Birthing – Your Birth and  
Beyond, The Way that Resonates With You



# Module 9 – Induction



# What if you go past your due date?

- ♥ Due dates are not based on science or research - only 4% of babies arrive on their due date
- ♥ Your ovulation cycle is unique
- ♥ The length of your period is unique
- ♥ Exact time of conception unknown, it may have been a week after ovulation
- ♥ It is ONLY an estimation!



# What is considered "normal"

- 💖 If your baby is born between 37 and 42 weeks it is considered medically "normal"
- 💖 The average baby is born in week 41
- 💖 Most people don't know this and may start asking if the baby has come yet. Feel free to turn off your phone!



Ultrasound scans, especially sizing ones,  
towards the end of your pregnancy are not  
accurate!



You should be OFFERED an induction.

It is NOT something you HAVE to do



# What is induction of labour?

- 💖 Artificial induction of labour is when medics attempt to start your labour. Not the natural start with hormone interaction between you and your baby that occurs when you are both ready
- 💖 It is usually offered around day 10 or 12 after your EDD
- 💖 Beginning with a stretch and sweep – usually at your local surgery
- 💖 Prostaglandin gel or pessary – on the antenatal ward
- 💖 ARM (Artificial Rupture of Membranes) – on the labour ward
- 💖 Syntocinon drip – on the labour ward



# Stretch and sweep or membrane sweep

- ♥ Your midwife will offer a Vaginal examination to determine the state of your cervix
- ♥ If it is in the correct position, they will attempt to put a finger into the opening of your cervix and then attempt to separate the membranes of the amniotic sac from your cervix
- ♥ An alternative procedure is to stretch or massage your cervix





# Prostaglandin – Tablets or pessary

- ♥ This begins with standard checks for you and your baby will be monitored
- ♥ Then there will be an internal examination to assess your cervix
- ♥ Propess pessary (tampon) or Prostin tablets are then inserted into your vagina
- ♥ The baby will then be monitored again and then every six hours after
- ♥ Internal examinations will be suggested depending on the method used and hospital trust
- ♥ Prostaglandins help the cervix to soften, shorten and begin to open but can cause contractions that are intense and can cause distress



# Artificial rupture of membranes – ARM

- ♥ This is a procedure where your waters are broken
- ♥ Standard checks for you and then your baby is monitored
- ♥ Internal examination performed to assess your cervix
- ♥ The amniotic sac is broken with an amnio-hook
- ♥ It is thought to increase labour contractions and progress



# Artificial Oxytocin – Syntocinon/Pitocin

- ♥ Given via a cannula directly into the blood stream
- ♥ Continuous electronic monitoring of your baby
- ♥ Unable to cross the blood brain barrier so you do not produce the appropriate endorphins
- ♥ Contraction pattern and intensity increases quickly
- ♥ Continue using artificial oxytocin to deliver the placenta



What if you choose to continue your pregnancy and decline induction?



# If you decline an induction

- ♥ You should be offered an appointment with a consultant
- ♥ An ultrasound scan to check your baby's growth and amount of amniotic fluid around the baby and blood flow in the umbilical cord
- ♥ They will regularly offer to check your baby's heartbeat daily, every other day, twice weekly
- ♥ You can keep monitoring your baby's movements



Know the Risks and benefits for both  
decisions



# Induction – Risks

- ♥ No 'ready to be born' signal from your baby – important hormone interaction
- ♥ No production of your body's own hormones - important for bonding, breastfeeding, etc
- ♥ You will be constantly monitored and have an IV drip in place which restricts movement
- ♥ Increase chance of caesarean or assisted birth for first time mothers
- ♥ Increased chance of foetal distress and over-stimulation of your uterus
- ♥ Reduced breastfeeding rates
- ♥ Increased depression and anxiety at two months post-partum



# Waiting – Risks

- ♥ Your placenta stops working – there is **NO** evidence to support this
- ♥ Your baby will grow huge and the skull will calcify – there is **NO** evidence to support this - bones do not fully calcify until we are 25 so this argument is frankly ridiculous
- ♥ Increased chance of a stillborn baby – 0.3% if waiting versus 0.03% if induced so a very small risk either way and 0.27% difference between the two





# 10 Things everyone should know about induction..

1. Induced labour is not like spontaneous labour
2. Some women find induction of labour more painful
3. Induction of labour is a package deal – One thing leads to another - monitoring is essential for safety, drugs are more likely needed, side effects of drugs etc
4. Stretch and sweep is not benign – only shown to shorten pregnancy by 24 hrs
5. Natural induction of labour is an oxymoron – If we are interfering, we are interfering..



# ..10 Things everyone should know about induction

6. Induction of labour is NOT the law – you do not have to agree to it
7. No such thing as just a little synthetic hormone – no matter the amount, it can have powerful effects
8. Women DO NOT fail – Inductions, systems and enforced ideas do
9. The risks of waiting are later, lower and sometimes less preventable than people think so do your research to make an informed decision that is right for you
10. The risks for older women, women with suspected large babies and women who conceived via IVF aren't as clear cut as is often suggested either



Do what feels right for you

Know the risks and benefits

Make sure you are making an informed

decision that you feel happy with



# Complementary Alternatives to Medical Induction

- 💖 Sex/Nipple Stimulation/Orgasm – natural prostaglandins in semen can stimulate labour as can production of oxytocin
- 💖 Acupuncture/Acupressure – stimulates your body to start labour – some evidence, no associated known risks
- 💖 Reflexology/Massage – Can support your body to start labour – Essential oils can stimulate labour e.g Clary sage



# Complementary Alternatives to Medical Induction

- 💖 Castor oil – NOT recommended (shown in studies to have no effect on inducing labour)
- 💖 Spicy food/Curries – No scientific evidence, only anecdotal
- 💖 Eating dates – One study showed eating 6+ dates per day from 36 weeks significantly reduced the need for induction and augmentation of labour - significantly higher mean cervical dilatation upon admission, significantly higher proportion of intact membranes (83% vs 60%,  $p = 0.007$ ). Spontaneous labour occurred in 96% of those who consumed dates, compared with 79% women in the non-date fruit consumers. The latent phase of the first stage of labour was also shorter



# Complementary Alternatives to Medical Induction

- 💖 Raspberry leaf tea – One study found there was no difference with the first stage of labour (contractions), however the second stage of labour (pushing) was shorter amongst the raspberry leaf group, as well as significantly reduced use of forceps (19.3% vs. 30.4%)
- 💖 Evening Primrose Oil - Oral dosage is 2-3x 500mg capsules daily from 36 weeks. If you are taking EPO internally, you can do this from 36 weeks – simply insert 2-3 capsules directly to the cervix before bed. You might like to wear a pad or liner



# Potential Impact of Medical Induction on you

- ♥ Impact on your confidence, feeling there is something wrong with your body – There is not, there is something wrong with medical expectations
- ♥ Feeling in a negative frame of mind before labour starts – try to stay positive
- ♥ You may start believing that the ‘experts’ know better – Your body and you know best. You were made to birth your baby



# Ideas of what you could do

- ♥ Make sure you get enough information so that you can make an informed choice
- ♥ Your consultant or midwife should give you evidence based information
- ♥ Ask for the research so you can read it for yourself
- ♥ There are **ALWAYS** options and it is **YOUR** choice when you feel fully informed
- ♥ Understand the risks of both choices – take the time so you can research, understand and make an informed decision that you feel happy with





# Practical Exercise

- ♥ Take some time to consider what feels right and what feels important for you.
- ♥ Only you can know what is right for you
- ♥ Try not to worry or really think much about induction because you may never even need to think about it!
- ♥ So, once you have reached the end of this module, put it aside in your mind unless you need to return and refresh your knowledge at a later date
- ♥ Remember to keep writing your thoughts and feelings in you diary and any questions that come up as a result of this module

