# MEDICATIONS FOR LABOUR & BIRTH

## INDUCTION OF LABOUR

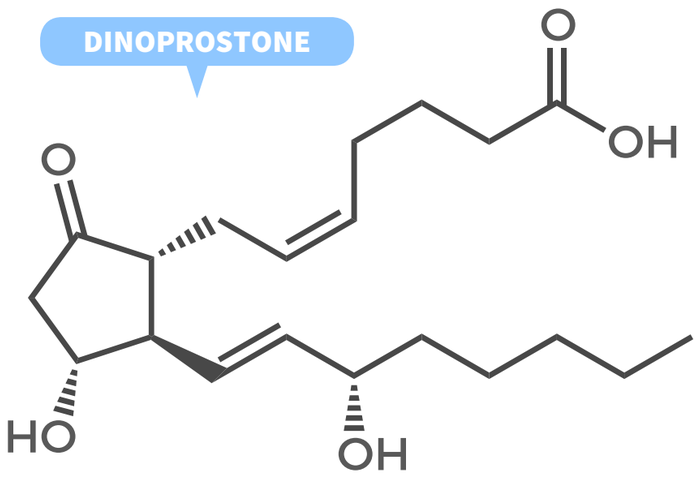
Most women go into labour after 42 weeks of pregnancy. Sometimes labour is induced when a baby is overdue or there are risks to the mother or baby's health.

**PESSARY** | **TABLET** | **GEL**



All of these induction methods contain prostaglandins, natural hormones that 'ripen' the cervix and induce labour. All three require insertion into the vagina.

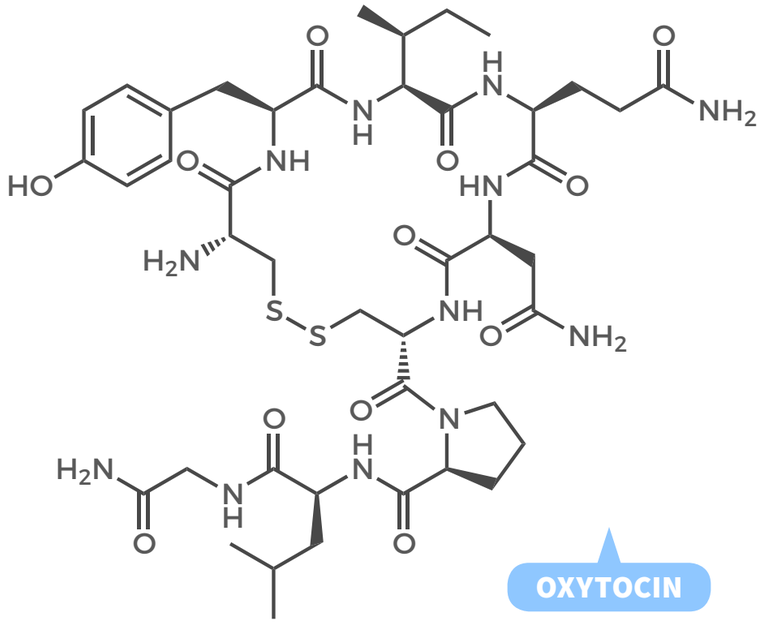
**DINOPROSTONE**




*Prostaglandin commonly used in labour induction*

## LABOUR

Oxytocin is the natural hormone that dilates the cervix and is responsible for contractions during labour. If contractions don't start, or aren't long enough or strong enough, a synthetic oxytocin drip can be given.

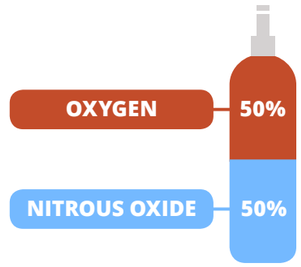



**OXYTOCIN**

*Medication brand names include syntocinon and pitocin*

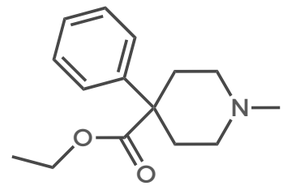
Oxytocin alone, or combined with ergometrine (a combination named 'syntometrine'), can be given to mothers in the third stage of labour to aid delivery of the placenta and stop blood loss after birth.

## PAINKILLERS




### GAS & AIR

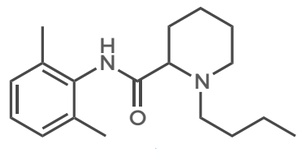
Also known as entonox; can reduce pain and make it more bearable. It can also make you feel woozy and light-headed.




**PETHIDINE**

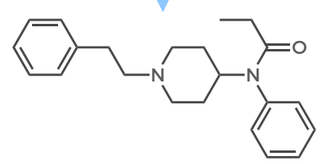
### OPIOIDS

Injections of opioids such as pethidine or diamorphine can be given to relieve (but not eliminate) pain during labour.




**BUPIVACAINE**

**FENTANYL**




### EPIDURAL

An epidural is an injection of drugs around the nerves in the spine that carry pain signals from the uterus. It is usually a mix of a local anaesthetic, such as bupivacaine, and an opioid, such as fentanyl. The pain relief is usually very effective, leaving most women pain-free, though it can take up to 40 minutes for the full effect to kick in.

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