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**Ready or not, here comes your induction!**

**Delaying induction of labour in low-risk women to reduce caesarean section rates.**

**Anna Tanswell**

Induction of labour is a surgical and/or medical interventional process used to stimulate the onset of labour. When used in line with appropriate medical indications, induction can be a beneficial procedure which supports the best outcome for women and their babies. However, research shows that caesarean section is more likely following induction, particularly when it is performed too early and without medical indication.

Recent statistics recorded by The AIHW state that 43.8% of women have their labour induced in Canberra. Nationally, caesarean section rates are at 36% with induction contributing to 29% of these.

The combination of evidence regarding negative outcomes for women and babies [in association with early and unnecessary induction] and suggestions by WHO that there’s no need to induce labour prior to 41 weeks’ gestation, indicates the need to change when induction is offered to low-risk women.

This policy proposes to delay induction until at least 41 weeks’ gestation in promotion of spontaneous labour for low-risk women. The policy and its guidelines will be directed to midwifery and obstetric teams in Canberra to promote collaboration and avoid the provision of conflicting advice and information [based on bias and preference]; instead, it provides for evidence-based information, clarity on the options available, and disclosure of the risks and benefits to women being assessed for induction. These changes will provide more opportunity for women to receive informed, individualised assessment and labour management prior to receiving induction; therefore, potentially reducing rates of induction and caesarean section in Canberra’s hospitals.

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