

Congratulations on your upcoming arrival! We're excited to welcome you to **Inova Alexandria Hospital Labor and Delivery Unit**. This message will help you prepare for your scheduled induction and make sure you feel confident and ready for your hospital experience.

Understanding Induction:

Induction of labor is a medical procedure to **start the labor process before it begins on its own**. Your provider will discuss the benefits, risk, and options with you in advance.

Methods of Labor Induction

Your provider will choose one or more methods based on your medical needs and how ready your cervix is:

- **Cervical Ripening** (to help open the cervix):
- **Medication:** Prostaglandins like Cervidil or Cytotec
- **Balloon:** A Foley bulb or Cook catheter applies gentle pressure
- **Pitocin** (Oxytocin): Used when the cervix is ready to help start contractions.
- **Breaking Your Water:** Your provider may break your water if it hasn't happened naturally, and your cervix is ready.

Pain Management Options

Everyone's pain is different. You'll have several options for relief:

- Breathing, movement, massage, and visualization
- Nitrous oxide (a gas that provides short-term relief)
- IV pain medicine
- Epidural

How Long Will It Take?

Labor can take time. Here's what to expect:

- **First-time in labor:** It may take 24 hours, or longer before active labor begins.
- **If you've labored before:** Things may move more quickly.
- **Once in active labor** (6 cm dilated): Each stage may take 4–6 hours, but everyone is different.

Scheduling & Potential Delays

Inductions may be delayed or rescheduled to prioritize patients with medical needs. If we anticipate a delay in your induction, you will be contacted by a member of our Labor and Delivery team.

Prior to Arrival:

To ensure a smooth experience, please complete the following before your arrival:

- ✓ Plan Your Visit: For more details on what to bring, please visit: [Inova Alexandria Hospital Birthing Center | Inova](#)
- ✓ Before you come to the hospital, make sure to have a meal, unless your provider has advised otherwise.
- ✓ For the latest visitation information, please visit: [Inova's Visitation Policy](#)

When You Arrive:

- **Arrive at your scheduled time.**
- Park in the free visitor lot across the street or the paid lot.
- Enter through the **Visitor Entrance, Door #1**. Take the escalator or elevator to the 2nd floor and follow the signs to Labor and Delivery.
- **Once checked in:**
 - You'll be taken to a private labor room as soon as one is available.



- A member of your care team will review your medical history, start your IV, perform any necessary lab work, and begin your induction.
- Feel free to share your birth preferences with us—we're here to support your plan.

After Delivery

We want you to have a safe and supportive recovery. Our postpartum and lactation teams will be here to support you. Most patients can go home:

- **24 hours** after a vaginal delivery
- **48 hours** after a C-section

Your provider will talk with you about what to expect and help plan your transition home.

Commitment to excellence

At **Inova Alexandria Hospital**, we are dedicated to providing a safe and supportive experience for you and your family. We are here to help you feel informed and empowered every step of the way.

Thank you for trusting us with your care. If you have questions, please reach out to your obstetric provider's office.

We look forward to welcoming you soon!

The Inova Alexandria Hospital Labor & Delivery Team