



'Tis the Season...
To Avoid Unnecessary
(Non-Medically Indicated)
Pre-Holiday & Pre-New Year
Induction

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It's that time of year again – The week before the winter holidays, when the reasons for inductions become more unspecified and coercive, and lacking in medical need. “The holidays” is not a medical condition or complication of pregnancy requiring induction of labour. There is no reason you need to book your baby's early arrival to fit someone else's schedule if you and your baby are healthy and well.

This week, as we near the winter holiday season, you may experience increased pressure in the healthcare system to schedule induction of labour before the holidays begin. And this year, it's a double whammy because Christmas is also over the weekend.

When I was working in the hospital as a perinatal nurse, my colleagues and I used to dread the week before the holidays because we knew to expect more inductions and more c-sections, and we looked forward to December 24th, 25th, 30th and 31st because we knew we would have more moms arriving in spontaneous labour (not-induced) and less c-sections (both elective and emergency) in part due to

If you ask a mother who has had an induced labour and spontaneous labour if they are the same, they will usually answer you in a flash – spontaneous labour is more physically manageable, the contractions are more gradual, and the contractions feel different. And you will get the same answer from any healthcare professional who has actually observed and supported a full

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the lower number of inductions. During the holidays, our patients were more well rested and recovered more quickly compared to our high number of induced patients who had laboured longer and harder the week before the holidays, many of them without a clear medical reason for induction... “elective” or “social” inductions were common.

spontaneous birth from admission to birth and a full induced labour from admission to birth (not just minutes at a time from walking in and out of the room).

This is not just my experience; research has shown that there is an increase in inductions and c-sections before the holidays and before New Years and the reasons for these inductions are less medically indicated and are instead influenced by non-medical factors.



It is important to know that induction without a clear medical indication carries unnecessary risks for you and your baby. There are evidence-based reasons that induction may be indicated for the health of mom and baby, and in these cases, the risks of continuing the pregnancy outweigh the risks of induction; however, “The holidays” or your doctor going on vacation are not medical reasons to

find room for you. Remember that the moms who are going into labour spontaneously are continuing to be admitted. Birthing units are used to the unpredictability of birth. It may be more convenient for them to convince you to rush your baby’s arrival on a certain day (although inductions can take more than a day in some cases), but you can take your time if you and your baby are both healthy and well.

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rush your baby’s arrival.

Being told that you need to come into the hospital for induction before the holidays because the unit happens to have a space open for you in their schedule that day is not a medical reason to rush your baby’s arrival. If there is a real medical reason that you need to be induced on another day, the hospital will find room for you! Because it is for a medical reason and not just simply convenience, they will

Here are some **red flags** that you may be being pressured into an unnecessary (not medically necessary, “social”, “elective”) induction and early birth before the holidays:

- Your care provider tells you they will only be around until a certain date.
- You hear something like, “We can fit you in tomorrow, but we’re busy later in the week.”
- The suggestion is made that your



care provider will not be available during the holiday season or will be “booked up”. (There will always be a qualified care provider available for moms going into labour over the holidays).

- Your care provider suggests that your baby is getting too big and it will be easier to deliver a little early. (There is no evidence supporting this for healthy



Ask questions to explore your options and make an informed choice



Here are some questions you can ask your care providers if you feel you are being pressured into an unnecessary pre-holiday induction:

- Why is induction indicated at this time? What has informed your care provider’s decision to suggest induction at this time?
- Do I need to make a decision right

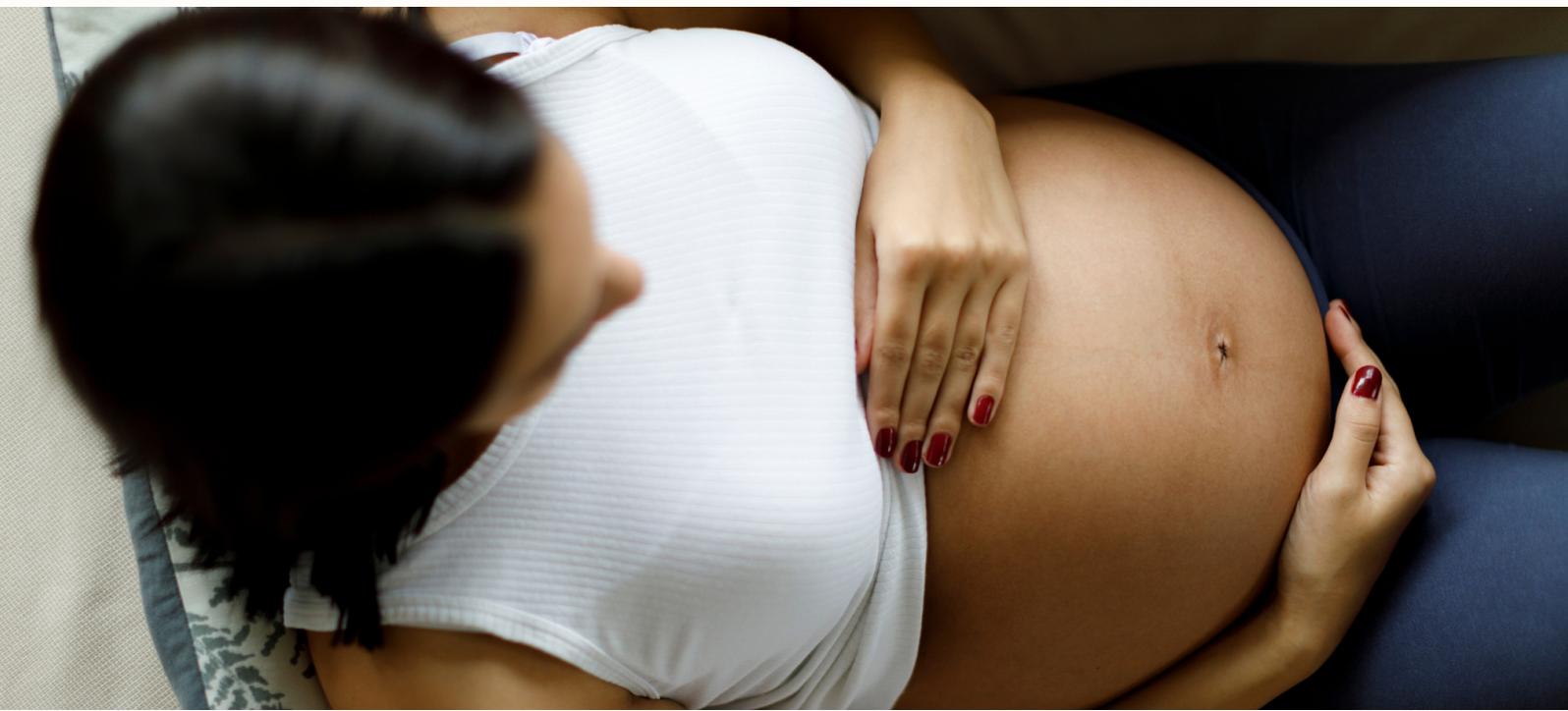
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uncomplicated pregnancy no matter what your baby’s estimated weigh is on ultrasound.)

- The timing of your baby’s delivery is discussed around travel and holiday celebrations.
- Holiday stress is driving feelings of wanting to get the pregnancy over with.

now? If not, why not? If yes, why (If you and your baby are both doing well, then the decision can likely wait.)

- How will induction benefit me and my baby?
- What are the risks of induction for me and for my baby?
- What method would you be using for induction? (This is important to assess risks of induction, as different methods carry different risks. All interventions carry risks.



If there is a medical reason for induction, the risks of not inducing outweigh the risks of induction, this is what induction is meant for.)

- Is there an alternative? What would happen if we waited a few days to go into labour spontaneously?
- Is “watchful waiting” an option? What would this entail?

If there is a medical reason for induction, the risks of not inducing for either mom or baby outweigh the risks of induction. This is what induction is meant for.

What you can do:

❄️ *Look into your options.* Use reliable credible information sources to support you in making an informed choice, such as [Public Health Agency of Canada - Family-centered maternity and Newborn Care: National Guidelines](#), [Association of Ontario Midwives](#), [Lamaze International](#), and [Childbirth Connection](#). Speak with your certified childbirth educator, professional doula, or patient advocate to get further information, learn from other parents’ experiences and make a list of questions for your care provider.

❄️ *Make a pros and cons list.* Label the personal reasons and the medical reasons. When considering a major intervention, such as induction or cesarian section, which both carry risks for mom and baby, it is important to look at the medical pros and cons. If your medical cons evidently outweigh the pros, then you may want more information and to ask your care provider why you should consider induction at this time if the risks outweigh the benefits.

❄️ *Trust you parenting instincts.* Listen to what your body and your baby are telling you after you have reviewed the research.

❄️ *Get support.* It may be hard to say “no” and to advocate for yourself within the system. Although it is entirely within your [patient rights](#) and an essential piece of family-centered care, some care providers do not respond well when patients don’t unquestioningly comply. For these reasons, consider bringing support to your prenatal appointments (either to accompany you in person or to support you by phone or text), so you will have someone to facilitate your informed-decision making process.



Disclaimer: The Information contained within this document is for general information purposes only and is not intended to provide any type of medical advice. Please seek professional assistance should you require it.