

Stretch and Sweep

This is an OPTIONAL procedure offered to women starting at 38 weeks of pregnancy

HOW IS IT DONE?

It involves a pelvic exam with your doctor using their fingers to find your cervix and sweeping/stretching the inside to help it soften/stretch/open in preparation for labour. It causes the release of a hormone called prostaglandin which helps get your cervix ready and may also help start contractions. Your doctor may also be able to tell you how open or “ready” your cervix already is.

WHY DO WE DO IT?

The main reason is to decrease the chance of you going too far past your due date. If you are more than 10 days past your due date we would recommend using hormones/chemicals to “induce” labour so you don’t go past 42 weeks. After 42 weeks of pregnancy the risk of still birth increases. Inductions carry their own set of risks.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

This is a low-risk procedure which is why we routinely offer it.

Anytime we do a vaginal exam it slightly increases the risk of infection (we wear sterile gloves to help prevent).

It could also cause bleeding (spotting is common, heavy period like bleeding requires assessment at the hospital. We do not offer this procedure if your placenta is too close to the cervix).

Rarely it could also cause your waters to break (this is why we wait until 38 weeks when your baby is term and safe to be delivered anyways)