

Oxytocin to Start or Advance Labour: 5 Questions to Ask

By: Alice Watt¹, Lori Weibel-Edgar², Maryann Murray³, Joanna Noble², Sylvia Hyland¹, Laura Zahreddine⁴, Sharon Dore⁵, Ioana Popescu⁶, Douglas Doucette⁷, Abigail Corbin⁸, Jennifer Blake⁹

Aim

Co-develop, co-design and disseminate a national resource together with patients to facilitate informed dialogue for the **safe use of IV oxytocin**.

Description

Why Partner with Patients to focus on Oxytocin?

Oxytocin is a high-alert medication. When used to start or advance labour the administration of oxytocin has been identified as a high-risk area of practice. **The mismanagement of IV oxytocin is HIROC's second highest ranked claim theme by litigation cost for acute organizations.**

Inadequate and inconsistent discussions with the pregnant person surrounding IV oxytocin is a common contributing factor in related medical-legal claims.

Initiative

To help mitigate these challenges, a resource was developed, led by ISMP Canada to support health care providers (HCPs) and pregnant individuals to start an informed conversation about the use of oxytocin to start or advance labour. The resource was developed by a pan-Canadian advisory panel of patients, families, HCPs, patient safety and other experts. Funded by the Canadian Medication Safety Coalition.

Mismanagement of IV oxytocin is the **2nd highest risk** based on HIROC claims

<https://www.hiroc.com/resources/reports/risk-ranking-sector>

“This patient handout could open the lines of communication between patients and health care providers and empower parents and carers to feel in control of their birth story.”
Christie, Patient Advocate



Christie's Story

www.ismp-canada.org/audio/Oxytocin-Story.m4a



Figure 1 - Oxytocin to Start or Advance Labour: 5 Questions to Ask - Patient Handout <https://www.ismp-canada.org/oxytocinsafety/>

“Staff have liked the easy to read, easy to follow format. We have the document laminated and available to be handed to patients whenever they are prescribed oxytocin for induction or augmentation.”
Winchester District Memorial Hospital

Pathway to a Successful Patient & Provider Co-Designed Resource

- Performed an environmental scan, literature review, and multi-incident analysis of oxytocin incidents.
- Established a pan-Canadian Advisory Panel to support the development of the resource and involved patients right from the start.
- Tested the resource with patients and HCPs, using a quality improvement approach.
- Revised the content and disseminated the resource nationally on World Patient Safety Day 2021.

Pilot Testing Results and Spread

- Results of pan-Canadian testing (n=61),
 - 100% of patients (n=15) and over 70% of HCPs (n=46) found this patient handout to be useful
 - 78% of HCPs found the handout easy to understand.
- Reflections: language matters when discussing risks associated with IV oxytocin.
- Currently working with the International Medication Safety Network (IMSN) Special Interest Group on Oxytocin Safety and presented it for the World Health Organization.
- Endorsement from 12 organizations. Further dissemination and evaluation activities planned.

1. Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) Canada, 2. Healthcare Insurance Reciprocal of Canada (HIROC), 3. Patients for Patient Safety Canada, 4. Provincial Council for Maternal and Child Health (PCMCH), 5. Canadian Association of Perinatal and Women's Health Nurses (CAPWHN), 6. Healthcare Excellence Canada, 7. Horizon Health Network/Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists, 8. Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM), 9. Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC)