

# WILL Training page—March 2021

Information on this page will help you with any discussions you have with women and doctors/midwives caring for them about WILL.

We will feature a different topic each month. This month is:

## Membrane Sweeps

Membrane sweeping is an intervention offered to hasten the onset of labour. However, membrane sweeps are not labelled as an official method of induction of labour in many UK hospitals.

There are no ongoing trials to inform practice in the UK, so should we be offering membrane sweeps or not?

NICE describes membrane sweeping as an adjunct to induction of labour rather than a method of induction of labour.

(NICE 2008)

Membrane sweeping compared to no treatment is more likely to result in labour onset and reduces the incidence of formal induction of labour (evidence of low certainty)

Membrane sweeping may cause vaginal bleeding and discomfort

(NICE 2008)

However, membrane sweeps compared to no treatment do not increase the chance of spontaneous vaginal birth.

Even though women acknowledged that membrane sweeps were uncomfortable, 88% would choose to have one in their next pregnancy.

There was also no difference in the risk of Caesarean birth between membrane sweeping and no treatment.

(COCHRANE 2020)

### WILL and membrane sweeps

- If membrane sweeps are offered to women taking part in WILL and they accept, please enter this information on the database.
- In WILL, we collect the date of the first membrane sweep following randomisation and the number of times it has been performed. This will provide information about whether membrane sweeps had any impact on the start of labour.

### True or False?

**Q. If a membrane sweep is not possible due to not being able to enter the cervix, cervical massage may be used instead.**

**A. True. According to NICE guidance (CG70), if the cervix is not open enough to admit a finger, massaging around the cervix in the vaginal fornices may achieve a similar effect.**

**Topic for next newsletter: Induction of labour vs spontaneous labour**

