

# Oxytocin to Start or Advance Labour: 5 Questions to Ask

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## Description

**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 for acute organizations.** Inadequate and inconsistent discussions with the pregnant person surrounding IV oxytocin is a common contributing factor in related medical-legal claims. To help mitigate these challenges, **a resource was developed 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.**

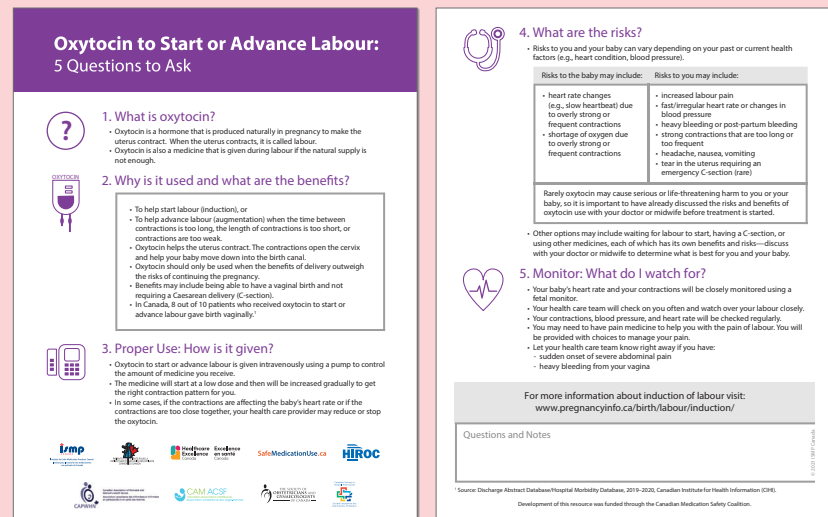


Figure 1 - Oxytocin to Start or Advance Labour: 5 Questions to Ask - Patient Handout <https://www.ismp-canada.org/oxytocinsafety/>

## Actions Taken

- 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.
- 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.

“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](https://www.ismp-canada.org/audio/Oxytocin-Story.m4a)

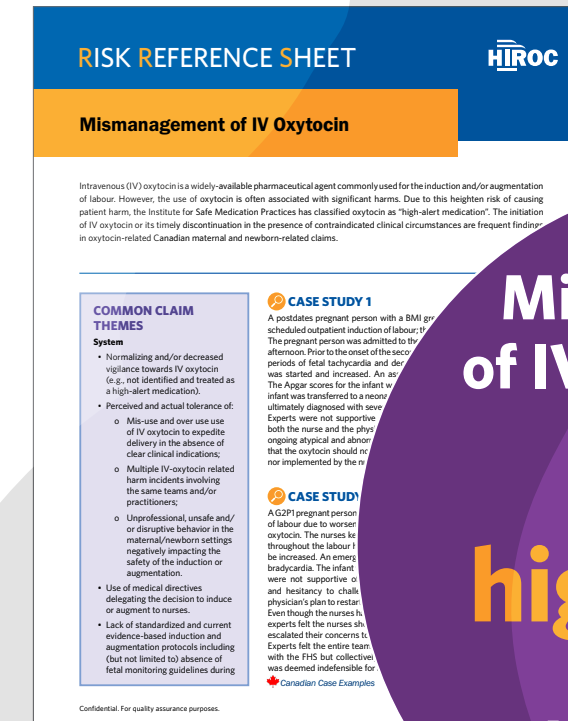


Figure 2 - HIROC Resource, Risk Reference Sheet: Mismanagement of IV Oxytocin <https://www.hiroc.com/resources/risk-reference-sheets/mismanagement-iv-oxytocin>

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

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

## Summary of Results

- Results of pan-Canadian testing (n=61),
  - 100% of patients and over 70% of HCPs 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.
- Endorsement from 12 organizations and further dissemination 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)