

Laminaria Placement

What are laminaria?

Laminaria are sterilized, dried sticks of seaweed that absorb fluid from the **cervix** (the opening of the uterus) and slowly expand to **dilate** (open) your cervix.



We have placed laminaria in your cervix to gently open your cervix and prevent injury during your procedure. The laminaria may have also been inserted along with wet gauze sponges to help keep the laminaria in place.

What can I expect after laminaria placement?

Common side effects

- It's normal to have some cramping and feelings of fullness. To help with the cramping or fullness, try using a warm compress or heating pad on your lower belly. If you are not allergic, you may take ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) or acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for this discomfort. Follow the instructions on your prescription for how much to take (dose) and how often to take these medications.
- You may have some vaginal bleeding (similar to spotting) or see a brown discharge (fluid), which is from the cleaning soap we use when we place the laminaria.

Rare complications

Rarely, the laminaria may cause your body to begin to **miscarry** (expel or lose the pregnancy tissue) at home. Symptoms of miscarriage include:

- Painful and regular contractions or cramping that do not get better after taking pain medication
- Heavy, bright red bleeding that is filling up pads (you may also see large blood clots)
- A gush of fluid from the vagina (called water breaking)
 - You can expect some dampness in the area from the wet gauze sponge that was placed with the laminaria. However, there shouldn't be a large and sudden rush of fluid.
- Material (like the laminaria, gauze sponge, or the pregnancy tissue) coming out of your body
 - If this happens, please save the laminaria and gauze sponge if possible and bring them into the hospital with you.

If you experience any of these symptoms, call the University of Michigan Labor and Delivery Triage at (734) 764-8134.

What can I do while I have laminaria placed?

- As long as you feel comfortable, it is safe to continue doing your daily activities such as light exercise, walking, lifting items around the house, and using the toilet.
- Please do not place anything in your vagina while the laminaria are in place, or if they fall out.
- Avoid douching (cleaning the inside of your vagina), vaginal sex, using tampons, bathing, and swimming while you have laminaria.
- **Do not eat or drink anything after midnight (12:00 AM) before your procedure.**

What do I do if the laminaria fall out?

Sometimes, some of the laminaria will fall out on their own. If this happens, do not put them back into the vagina and do not throw them away. Put them in a

bag and bring them back to your next appointment, or take a photo of how many fell out. It is important that we make sure the same number of laminaria are removed on the day of your procedure as we placed.

What if I cannot make it back to the doctor or I decide not to have the procedure after laminaria placement?

No matter what decision you make, it is important to return to your healthcare provider to have the laminaria removed within 24 hours after they're placed to avoid infection or early delivery. Do not try to remove them yourself.

When do I need to call my healthcare provider?

Call the University of Michigan Labor and Delivery Triage at (734) 764-8134 if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Any signs or symptoms of miscarriage (described above)
- Temperature of more than 100.4° F
- Blood soaking through 2 or more pads in 1 hour
- Passing blood clots that are larger than a golf ball

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Author: Charisse Loder, MD MSc FACOG
Edited by: Brittany Batell, MPH MSW

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