

No connection between induced labor, autism

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American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists advises against changes to current practice.

(HealthDay)—There is no connection between inducing labor in childbirth and autism, according to a new statement released Monday by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

Existing guidelines on when and how labor should be induced or accelerated should not be changed, because limiting labor inductions could have [negative effects](#) on the health of women and their babies, ACOG's committee on obstetric practice recommended in a "committee opinion."

Although some studies have suggested there may be a link between autism and the use of oxytocin to induce or speed up labor, this research has significant limitations, according to an ACOG news release. The studies were small, inconsistent and retrospective, the opinion said, and limited comparison groups meant certain factors might not have been accounted for.

The committee concluded there is no evidence to prove that labor induction causes [autism](#).

The group also cautioned that any reduction in labor induction would "almost certainly" have a negative effect on patient care, and likely result in more [cesarean deliveries](#).

"In obstetric practice, labor induction and augmentation play an essential role in protecting the health of some mothers and in promoting safe delivery of many babies," Dr. Jeffrey Ecker, committee chair, said in the news release.

"When compared with these benefits, the research we reviewed in assembling this committee opinion, relative to the utilization of oxytocin, had clear limitations," Ecker said. "Because of this, these studies should not impact how obstetricians already safely and effectively use [labor induction](#) and augmentation when caring for their patients."

The committee's opinion was endorsed by the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine. The findings were published in the May issue of *Obstetrics & Gynecology*.

More information: The March of Dimes has more about [inducing labor](#).

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