

Inducing Labor Naturally

Have you gone way past your due date?

Are you receiving threats of surgical induction or caesarean section if things don't get moving soon?

Things aren't sounding too good and the stress levels are rising.

Relax!

Please note: This booklet provides information of a general nature and is designed for educational purposes only. If you have any concerns about your own health or the health of your child, you should always consult with a physician or other healthcare professional.

Take comfort in knowing there are some alternatives that you can try first to induce labour naturally before you go back for your next check up.

Here are some suggestions that may help you to get things moving along and reduce the risk of medical intervention. Please note that natural labor induction is still a form of intervention and therefore should only be considered if you have gone past your due date or if medical intervention is eminent.

If your waters have not broken, you can try any of the following suggestions. However if your waters have broken, be sure not to put anything inside the vagina i.e. fingers, penis, oil, pessaries, tampons. Do not take a bath. Vaginal examination should only be done if absolutely necessary; otherwise you could introduce infection.

Ideas to try:

1. Plan a nice romantic evening for two with your partner. Burn some relaxing essential oils eg Lavender – add a drop of jasmine if you have some (this is an aphrodisiac as well as a uterine stimulant). Dim the lights. Take a bath together and get intimate. Make love a lot!! ... semen contains prostaglandins, which help soften the cervix. Orgasms help to get the uterus contracting.
2. If this fails, it's time to get even more active! Time to go for a brisk walk around the block. Do lots of squatting – up and down. Scrub the floor or dust the walls. This will help the baby's head move down and into position. Belly dancing is the best form of activity to get the head down and rotating – especially once in labor.
3. Try a spot of nipple stimulation – just one side at a time for a few minutes each side. If not successful keep trying every couple of hours. This mimics a baby sucking and releases natural oxytocins which contract the uterus. You need to persist with this for a long time though. This is a good form of stimulation in the 3rd stage also, to help the placenta become expelled.
4. Castor oil – the old fashioned favourite. Works by causing diarrhoea that irritates the uterus and kick starts contractions. Not as pleasant as the previous mentioned methods though!
5. Evening Primrose oil can be taken orally or vaginally to help soften the cervix.
6. Raspberry Leaf Tea – drink anytime after the 35th week of pregnancy as a uterine tonic.
7. Consult an Aromatherapist and have a special labour blend made up of essential oils that can be massaged into the abdomen to initiate labor and keep it going. Also burn some oils in the oil burner eg lavender and jasmine. A qualified aromatherapist should always be consulted before using essential oils during pregnancy.

8. Reflexology and Acupuncture – Make an appointment to see a therapist or ask an obliging friend to locate some points for you which can stimulate labor.
 - (a) On the inside of the ankle between the anklebone and Achilles tendon.
 - (b) On the inside of the leg, four finger widths up from the ankle bone on the calf muscle, just behind the bone.
 - (c) Underneath the big toe.
 - (d) On the sacrum in the little hollows, working with your thumbs.
9. Homeopathy – homeopathic caulophyllum 200 has been used very successfully for inducing labor naturally. Consult a homeopath or naturopath for the exact dosage.
10. Herbs – There are several different herbs that can be used during pregnancy. The raspberry leaf tea is useful to tone the uterus; camomile tea can help to calm and relax you if you are feeling stressed. Herbs can be taken in tablet, syrup or tincture form, applied as ointments, creams, compresses or poultices, or used externally in the bath. A qualified herbalist should be consulted if planning to use these as some can't be used if using homeopathy or aromatherapy.
11. Try some meditation – tune into your unborn child and communicate that you are ready for him or her to be born. Try to get some clarity around why things are not happening yet. Is there tension at home or around the birth expectation? Is there unresolved issues concerning pain? If so, these need to be addressed because they could be causing a block in the progress of labor. Consult a therapist/ healer if you feel this is necessary in order to clear these blocks.
12. Visualise!! Get comfortable and make sure you're feeling relaxed. Try to visualise the birth – your surroundings, who is with you and how do you feel? Play with this image until it feels right – and with all the tension gone. Now visualise the cervix opening, the uterus helping to push the baby out, the head emerging And next a wonderful healthy newborn baby.
13. Relax and let it happen. The baby will come when the time is right. Trust in the process and above all trust your own feelings!