

Non-Medicinal Forms of Induction—recommended only when facing a medical induction and at term

Important Points to note prior to trying methods mentioned below:

1. Get the “all clear”

It’s important to have the “all clear” from your medical professional, especially if you have a pre-existing medical condition.

2. Make sure the therapist is qualified and experienced

It’s very important to ensure that the person treating you is qualified and is knowledgeable in pregnancy and labor aspects of their therapy. If they do not have appropriate training or knowledge of pregnancy and birth, this may be unsafe as extra care must be taken when women are pregnant and during labor.

3. Be informed

It’s also important that you make sure you are well informed in regards to details of each method, as research is ever changing and some methods may not be suitable for you, especially if you have pre-existing condition. A properly qualified therapist may have some recommended reading for you

4. Remember any form of induction is an induction

Once you stimulate labor, either medically or by yourself, you potentially make yourself open to further interventions or complications. Please don’t take any form of induction lightly. Weigh the pros and cons and opt for choices that are designed at relaxing you and opening your mind and body to labor. Please don’t get caught up forcing your body and baby into labor if it’s just not meant to be.

5. If you are in early labor or trying to get things moving remember these things:

- Rest at night as best you can. Use the day to get things moving but don’t exhaust all your energy in early labor, it’s like sprinting the first 5 km of a marathon. You have a long way to go and more energy will be required in the later stages. Being exhausted later makes the seduction of pain relief or intervention stronger and more likely.
- Walk—especially through contractions, it’s the best thing you can do.
- Stairs—climbing stairs is a great way to get things going in to help get the baby into a good position
- Avoid the bath or swimming—it counteracts gravity. Use the shower instead and you can sit down on a chair or birth ball. Sitting on a chair backwards can encourage baby into better position, keep your hips higher than your knees.
- Keep up right when possible, make use of gravity. When the uterus contracts lean forward at about a 45° angle, bend your knees and legs wide.
- Keep yourself busy, find yourself a project to do to distract yourself to help with anticipation. Sort recipes, look through photos, have lunch or dinner with friends or family, scrapbook, read a book, anything to keep your mind off going into labor.
- Most importantly remember...that baby will come when baby is ready, sometimes no matter what you will to happen baby will not come when we would most like it. The greatest gift you can give your baby right now is the gift of choosing their own birthdate, should the both of you be healthy



Methods of Induction

1. Sex (Obviously you don't have to be at term to partake in this first option!)

Sex is a commonly suggested method of natural induction due to the semen containing prostaglandins which help to ripen the cervix. Sex can be a great way to relax and many mothers have found that they have gone into labor after having sex, especially sex during early labor can step things up a notch. Another common method of natural induction, the female orgasm, maybe more useful. When a woman experiences an orgasm, she produces oxytocin—the labor hormone.

2. Spicy food

Spicy food and curry give some people diarrhea, so another one to think twice about if this is for you, but some people swear by it for getting labor started.

3. Nipple stimulation

Nipple stimulation produces oxytocin and can produce some strong side effects so you can try stimulating your nipples with your fingers (including your areola, as a baby would when nursing), massaging one at a time. An alternate option is if you were still nursing an older child, let them latch and the sucking action will do the same thing or if you want to be intimate with your partner. Massage the first nipple for five minutes (if contractions have not started yet) and then wait about 15 minutes or so to see if anything happens before doing more. It's a good idea to take your mind off things by getting on with your usual duties than sitting and waiting for something to happen—so try to keep busy! If after 15 minutes nothing has happened, start again on the other side. Once labor is well-established, stop the stimulation.

4. Induction massage

As with induction acupuncture, induction massage can be given on or after your due date. The massage therapists (who should be experienced in induction massage) work on acupressure points which are normally avoided during pregnancy, because it can trigger labor. As with normal massage induction massage helps to relax and calm your body, easing tension and helping to create a clear and grounded space. The therapist also may use essential oils, which can assist with labor induction. It's generally a very successful form of labor induction if the body and baby are ready and the mother is willing.

5. Acupuncture

Acupuncture has been very successful for thousands of years to induce women who are overdue in their pregnancy. To be eligible for induction acupuncture you must be at your estimate due date or after, unless otherwise recommended by your doctor or midwife. While there is no risk from having acupuncture for induction, it does help speed up your natural process. Therefore you must consult with your doctor or midwife before any induction.

6. Acupressure

This can be done at home by yourself or your partner. Ask me for an informational handout.



7. Sweeping or stripping the membranes

Stretch and sweep of the membranes involves your medical professional separating the membranes from the cervix by a vaginal exam. This may be a little uncomfortable for some women, but on the other hand, some have said they didn't feel much at all. Some spotting or bleeding may occur as a result and some find they have irregular contractions after a sweep, which may be uncomfortable, but still not progress into labor. A sweep can be performed on women who are at term and have no other complications.

8. Foley Bulb or Cook Catheter

This something your care provider can insert into your cervix as long as you are dilated to at least one centimeter. It is small rubber tubing that is then inflated once placed inside the cervix to manually dilate the cervix and hopefully encourage labor to start.

9. Homeopathy (this is medicinal, so do NOT attempt without consulting a professional)

There are some homeopathic remedies available to help encourage labor, however you will need to consult a qualified homeopathic or naturopath doctor for more information. Ask about black and blue cohosh tincture.

10. Castor oil

Ask me for a recipe for a shake to encourage labor, if interested. It is only recommended to try 24 hours prior to a scheduled medical induction.

*** Please note that all of these suggestions and advice are of a generalized nature only and not intended to replace advice from a qualified professional.

