

Castor Oil

Is Castor Oil Safe To Induce Labor?

It is safe to use castor oil when you are overdue. Though there is no scientific proof of its benefits, doctors and midwives use it for inducing labor in the case of post-term pregnancies. However, you cannot use it until you reach 37 weeks of pregnancy. Also, you should not be using it unless your doctor recommends it. Your healthcare provider alone can decide when you can take it.

How Does Castor Oil Work To Induce Labor?

Castor oil is known to be one of the best laxatives. It can also cause diarrhea due to its laxative properties.

Here are the ways it helps jump-start the labor:

- It can cause cramps in the intestines, which stimulates the bowels and irritates the uterus to start contracting.
- It is known to limit fluid absorption, thereby dehydrating the body and causing contractions.
- Researchers have discovered that ricinoleic acid targets the release of prostaglandin receptors leading to contractions in the uterus.

How Long Does It Take For Castor Oil To Induce Labor?

You will begin to see the effects in two to six hours of ingestion. It starts with cramping that would last for one to six hours, and then it takes about five hours to one day for labor contractions to begin. The time taken for active labor varies from individual to individual. Some of them may get within 24 hours, while some may get it with the second dosage.

The Preparation Before Taking Castor Oil:

- Make sure you take plenty of water so as that keeps you away from getting dehydrated.
- Be prepared to rush to a toilet.
- Keep your hospital bag ready.
- Eat a healthy lighter protein based meal since a large meal can make you feel nauseous.

Are There Any Risks Associated With Castor Oil?

Some women might face certain problems when they use castor oil for inducing labor.

1. **Diarrhea and dehydration:** You may feel nauseous and have an upset stomach, diarrhea, and cramping. Nausea and diarrhea can lead to dehydration, causing fatigue. The stress associated with cramping can increase the heart rate of the baby.
2. **Passage of meconium:** Since castor oil travels through the placenta to the baby, it can force the baby to pass meconium (first stool). If it is inhaled or aspirated into the lungs, it will lead to aspiration pneumonia which is fatal and causes developmental delays in the baby. However, it is not scientifically proven that castor oil will lead to the passing of meconium.
3. **Irregular contractions:** Sometimes, there would be hours of abnormal contractions, which are not real labor pain. They can make you feel exhausted.

Research Studies Regarding Castor Oil Induction:

Here are some quick research-backed facts that will help you decide whether or not to have castor oil for labor:

- According to one study, castor oil increased the risk of C-section. However, this was a very short study and was not backed up with follow-up studies.
- In another study, castor oil was found to increase the chances of labor in nearly 58% of the participants.
- One report says that castor oil is neither risky nor helpful in inducing labor.
- 'Castor oil and soap enema study' shows increasing rates of labor induction with the use of castor oil.
- A research paper published in the 'Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,' says the key ingredient of castor oil, ricinoleic acid, targets prostaglandin receptors of intestines and uterus to stimulate contractions.



Shake to Encourage Labor

Only recommended to try as a last resort 24 hours prior to a scheduled induction. It is not a guarantee, but it is a better option than a medical induction if it works. It may cause diarrhea and stomach cramps.

Instructions

After a full night sleep and 60-90 minutes after a good protein breakfast, but not heavy.

After it is consumed, go lay down for an hour and then get up and be active.

- 1 1/2 cups ice cream (flavor of your choice)
- 3oz castor oil (equivalent to 6 tablespoons, can purchase at most pharmacies or grocery stores)
- 1 egg (yes, a raw egg)
- Blend with enough milk to thin and drink it all within 20 minutes

