

PREPARING FOR BIRTH

Raspberry Leaf Tea

Raspberry leaf is a uterine tonic, which also has added benefits after the birth for breastmilk production. You can buy some from your health food store. It's generally recommended any time after 24 weeks in a healthy pregnancy. Make sure you check with your medical professional or speak with a naturopathic doctor to see if it's appropriate for you.

Eat Date Fruit

Consuming 3-4 pieces of Medjool date fruit a day from 36wks on “significantly reduce the need for an induction and/or augmentation of labor and produced a more favorable outcome” According to a study on the effects of late pregnancy consumption of date fruit on labor and delivery: “We set out to investigate the effective date fruit consumption on labor parameters and delivery outcomes. 69 women consumed six date fruits per day for four weeks prior to the estimated date of delivery, compared with 45 women who consumes none.

The women who consumed date fruit:

- Had significantly higher mean cervical dilation upon admission compared with the non-date fruit consumers. (3.52 cm vs. 2.02 cm)
- Had a significantly higher proportion of intact membranes. (83% vs. 60%)
- Spontaneous labor occurred in 96% of those who consumed dates, compared with 79% of women in the non-date fruit consumers.
- Use of Pitocin, for inducing/augmenting labor, was significantly lower in women who consume dates (28%), compared with non-date fruit consumers (47%).
- The mean latent Phase of the first stage of labor was shorter and women who consumed date fruit compared with the non-date fruit consumers, 510 minutes vs 906 minutes. It is concluded that the consumption of date fruit in the last four weeks before labor significantly reduce the need for induction and augmentation of labor and produced a more favorable but nonsignificant delivery outcome. The results warrant a randomize controlled trial.”

Evening Primrose Oil (EPO)

Evening Primrose oil is another cervix ripening method. EPO helps by imitating prostaglandins and can be used orally or internally. A usual oral dose is 2 to 3 of 500 mg capsules daily from 36 weeks. If you were taking EPO internally you can do this from 36 weeks—simply insert 2 to 3 capsules directly into the cervix before bed you might like to wear a pad or liner as it can get messy when you get up.

Evidence Based Birth has podcast episodes for each of these topics. Red Raspberry Leaf Tea Episode 139, Date Fruit and castor oil is episode 128, and EPO episode 134. Check them out if you want!