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If Overdue how to aid labour onset & avoid induction

37 weeks is considered term so labour can start at anytime between 37-42 weeks. If labour is not starting as you reach the 42 week mark the hospital may seek to schedule an induction. Here are some tips to help you start labour spontaneously:

- Acupuncture - induction using acupuncture generally works within 6-48 hours of having your treatment.
- Reflexology
- Acupressure techniques - see document in pack
- Homeopathy - Pulsatilla and Caulophyllum are two commonly used homeopathic remedies used to stimulate labour. Consult a homeopath before use (try Down to Earth, Georges Street).
- Squats and lots of them (except if baby is breech)!
- Relax/laugh/watch funny movies
- Have a massage
- Go for a walk
- Bounce on a birthing ball
- Check pelvic alignment with a physiotherapist or osteopath (can help release pelvic ligaments)
- Evening Primrose Oil is another 'cervix ripening' method. EPO helps by imitating prostaglandin can be used orally and/or internally. A usual oral dosage is 2-3 of 500mg capsules daily from 36 weeks. If you are taking EPO internally, you can do this from 36 weeks – simply insert 2-3 capsules directly to the cervix before bed. You might like to wear a pad or liner.
- Raspberry leaf tea to tone uterine muscles
- Spicy food/curry - Again, spicy food and curry gives some people the runs, so another one to think twice about if this is you! But some people swear by it for getting their labour started.
- Eat dates - studies have shown that consumption of date fruit in the last 4 weeks before labour significantly reduced the need for induction and augmentation of labour, and produced a more favourable outcomes.
- Climb stairs - provided you have the energy and don't totally exhaust yourself for labour!
- Eat fresh pineapple -Enzymes found in pineapple are said to help ripen the cervix, which can bring on labour.
- Eat black liquorice - another food that can help stimulate prostaglandin. Also, eating too much can cause diarrhoea inducing labour.
- Eggplant - Many people swear by eggplant parmigiana to induce labor
- Sex - can help you relax and when a female reaches orgasm she produces oxytocin

the labour hormone

- Nipple stimulation produces oxytocin and can produce some strong effects, so you can try stimulating your nipples. You can also try expressing some colostrum which can also help
- Blowing up balloons: the theory is that the build up of abdominal pressure encourages labour to start.
- Castor oil - Women have been using castor oil to help induce labour for decades. In fact, many old school physicians and midwives swear by it. Castor oil can certainly be used for inducing labour, but it tastes horrible and should be taken with caution and guidance from a health professional.

It works by causing spasms in the intestines, which, because of their close proximity to the uterus toward the end of pregnancy, can cause the uterus to cramp. This results in labour. You can take one to three ounces of castor oil mixed with six ounces of orange juice to cut its oiliness. Some practitioners suggest taking a single dose; others suggest repeated doses depending on your response. Castor oil will usually cause your bowels to empty within about three to four hours. Shortly afterwards, you should be in labour. **Castor oil should not be taken without discussing with your midwife or doctor** as it can cause a baby to become distressed if not taken with guidance

- Sweeping the membranes involves your medical carer separating the membranes from the cervix by vaginal exam. This may be a little uncomfortable for some women and 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 and still not progress into labour. A sweep can be performed on women who are at term and have no other complications. Ideally though this method is more of a last resort of all of these methods, as it is invasive and not really natural. You also give bacteria the opportunity to grow when you have things unnecessarily inserted into your vagina, right up to your cervix.

