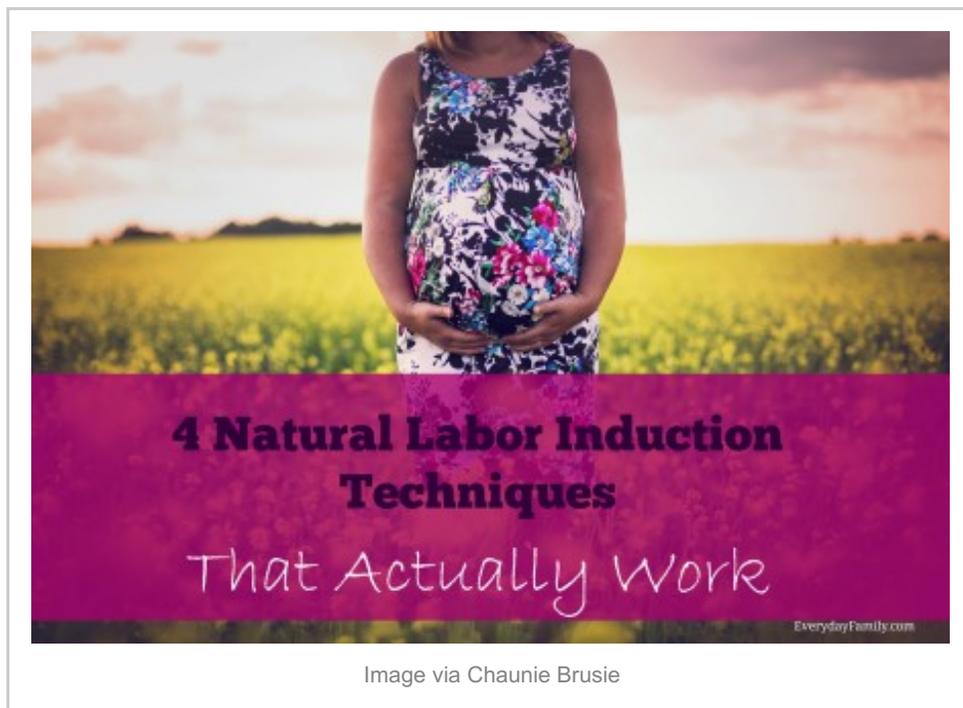


4 Natural Induction Techniques that Actually Work

 www.everydayfamily.com/slideshow/4-natural-induction-techniques-actually-work/



Is there anything Googled more than “induction techniques” by any woman with Internet access in the last weeks of pregnancy?

Those last few weeks are no joke, you guys. And as a self-professed miserable pregnant woman, let me just say “I feel you. Boy, do I feel you.”

But before you start trying to kick yourself into labor by jumping on your kids' trampoline or stuffing your face full of the pineapple, let's get down to the real information here, shall we? Are there any natural induction techniques that actually work?

Nipple Stimulation

Before we talk about this, let's get our official disclaimer out of the way: I am not a doctor, and this is not professional medical advice. This is all based on my personal experience as a mom and research I have done as an OB nurse, but for obvious reasons, do not attempt any natural labor induction techniques at home without your doctor or care provider's consent, mmkkk?

All righty then.

Stimulating the nipples releases oxytocin in the body, which stimulates contractions — it's the reason that breastfeeding right after birth is so important to help your uterus contract. Additionally, the synthetic form of oxytocin, Pitocin, is what hospitals use to induce and stimulate labor, so obviously this is a hormone that knows what it's doing.

The trick to using nipple stimulation to kick yourself into labor is 1) waiting until your body is ready — doing this at 37 weeks, for instance is not only probably futile but also could be really dangerous, and 2) doing it consistently enough to get the oxytocin flowing.

I admit that, with my third baby, I was so desperate that I actually tried this technique. Basically, it boils down to using a breast pump until you feel a contraction, and continuing at regular intervals, being careful not to produce too many contractions. It worked to produce contractions for me, but it was so hard to do it on a regular basis that, eventually, I gave up. (And labor started naturally, on its own, at exactly 40 weeks for me!)

There are some really interesting studies that suggest that nipple stimulation could be as effective as IV Pitocin, but the studies are limited, and in most cases, nipple stimulation alone seems to take longer at later stages of labor to keep contractions going. It's also important to note that in most studies that have looked at nipple stimulation to bring on contractions, the woman's water has already been broken.

Bottom line: There's no question that nipple stimulation can help contractions start or continue, but without clear-cut guidelines on the best way to do it or without studies to prove its safety for actually inducing labor, it's best to only attempt nipple stimulation under the guidance and supervision of your care provider.

Eating this Magical Fruit

OK, after that long and drawn-out explanation, here's some simple (and good!) news: there is something super easy and super safe that you can do to help speed up your labor:

Eat dates!

According to one study, women who ate dates every day in the last month of pregnancy sped up labor, dilated faster, and had less need for artificial inductions when compared to women who never touched a date in their lives. To get the most benefit, do what these women did and eat up to six dates every day. Hey, desperate times call for desperate measures, right?

Bottom line: Eating dates during the last month of pregnancy is a safe way to lead to a better labor!

Membrane Sweep

I have heard conflicting things about the infamous “membrane sweep” to get labor rolling from the doctors I worked with as an OB nurse, but according to online studies, it actually *is* effective in getting labor started. The only catch? It can be really uncomfortable and cause some bleeding and irregular contractions. But if you're really desperate and your care provider is up for it, you can request a membrane sweep when you are full term. It can be done right in the office.

Bottom line: Sweeping the membranes can lead to labor, but it's not a 100% guarantee, and it can be really uncomfortable.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture has been linked to everything from reducing morning sickness during pregnancy to helping ease the pain of labor, and it has shown promising results as a way to induce labor as well. One study looked at 10 women who used acupuncture to start labor, and all of the women saw effective induction with the technique. Researchers couldn't say for certain that it was the acupuncture that did it, but in general, acupuncture is considered a safe practice for pregnancy, so this may be one worth trying.

Bottom line: Acupuncture has been linked to successful labor induction, but be sure to find a certified acupuncturist to give this one a shot! (No pun intended.)

Did you induce labor naturally?

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