

Want a Better, Faster Labor? Eat This Underrated Fruit

[M. mom.me/pregnancy/16743-want-better-faster-labor-eat-dates/](http://mom.me/pregnancy/16743-want-better-faster-labor-eat-dates/)

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The moment I hit full term during each of my four pregnancies, you had better believe that I was Googling "all-natural induction techniques" like no one's business.

Sure, my four years in labor and delivery nursing had taught me that most of those techniques (save some serious nipple stimulation) are pretty futile, but a woman in her last few weeks of pregnancy is anything but rational.

Unfortunately, none of my DIY methods to move along my labors more quickly worked, but surprisingly enough, there is one completely natural technique that would have done the trick—and it would have required only doing one of my favorite pregnancy activities:

Eating.

According to a study in the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, eating one simple food during the last four weeks of pregnancy can actually lead a pregnant woman to dilate, lower the risk for induction and shorten her labor drastically.

What is this miracle food, you ask?

Dates.

The study looked at 69 women who ate six dates every day for the last four weeks of pregnancy, compared to approximately the same amount of women who did not, with no real difference in other aspects of their pregnancies.

Surprisingly enough, the researchers found that the date-eating women were significantly more dilated—almost two times more—than the non-date-eating women when they went into labor naturally. The date eaters were dilated almost to four centimeters upon admission, while the non date-eaters were barely dilated past two.

As the icing on the date cake, the women who ate the dates every day had significantly shorter labors.

Not only that, but the dates seemed to support women going into labor on their own—and staying that way. 96 percent of the date-eaters went into spontaneous labor, compared to 76 percent of the non-date eaters. And almost half of the women who didn't eat dates needed medication to augment their labors, while barely a quarter of the date eaters required Pitocin to speed things along.

And as the icing on the date cake, the women who ate the dates every day had significantly shorter labors—their labors were reduced by almost *six hours* as compared to the non-date eaters.

In the end, the researchers concluded that, “the consumption of date fruit in the last 4 weeks before labor significantly reduced the need for induction and augmentation of labor, and produced a more favorable, but non-significant, delivery outcome.”

Amen to that.

I have to admit that I have never actually even seen a date fruit, let alone ate one, but if you're entering that brutal last month of pregnancy, my recommendation is to get your hands on a couple (or 168) of them.