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Natural ways to prepare for labour

As the big day on which you hope to have your baby approaches, the questions pertaining to the “Due date” occupy more time, rightfully so, as a baby seldom arrives on his or her ETA (expected time of arrival)!

The technological era in which we live has brought along many advantages, it allows us to detect some difficulties before we are presented with them. Unfortunately technology has also given us false confidence, resulting in us abandoning, to some extent, our own judgment. This is why we believe that we can predict the due date of babies yet to be born (not taking into consideration that different people, different cultures, have different gestational periods.). Statistics (not necessarily accurate, never the less the only ones we have!) show that pregnancies extending beyond 2 weeks after the due date calculated by the Ultrasound done around 12 weeks of gestation, show a (minimal) increase in infant morbidity (problems pertaining to the baby) and births requiring medical intervention. Therefore, most Obstetricians will discourage a mother to be, from allowing her pregnancy to progress beyond two weeks post dates. Usually once your pregnancy has extended to 2 weeks past the nominated Due date, your Doctor will almost insist that you are admitted to Hospital and that your labour is induced. There are however a few natural ways to prepare your body for childbirth and others to stimulate the onset of Labour. The methods described below are a mild form of stimulation and will not contribute to your going into Labour prematurely, yet it is advised to start preparing as from the 36th week onwards.

Early preparation for childbirth

Raspberry tea is said to loosen the smooth muscles of the pelvic floor and regulate ones stools which in turn stimulates the uterus which lies paralel to the intestines.

Linseed (one tablespoon crushed seeds per day) stimulates the mucus membranes of the body, the vaginal lubrication increases facilitating the passage of the baby.

Regular (once or twice a day) massage of the perineum (the area between the vagina and the rectum) with almond, sesame, jojoba or grapeseed oil and if possible add a few drops of Juniperberry essential oil. Massage the perineum using small circular movements, increasing the circulation in this area and making it more pliable.

Massage of the nipples helps prepare them for feeding, sun light or lots of “air time” also helps, should you be prone to sensitive nipples you can go for laser therapy before the birth of your babe.

Antenatal exercises are very helpful in the preparation for childbirth as these strengthen and increase the circulation to the muscles you will be using during labour. Antenatal excersises will also make you familiar with the muscles you will be using and allow you to focus on the dialatation or contraction of these muscles during childbirth. Belly “dancing” and spending some time every day on your hands and knees helps babe find the right position to enter into the pelvis properly.

There are many suggestions for Homeopathic preparation for child birth, two of the most common remedies are Pulstatilla (assists with the positioning of babe) and Caulophyllum (relax and soften smooth muscle, cervix and stimulate the onset of regular contractions)

A recent study from the Netherlands suggests that eating of raw veg and fruits decreases the time needed to birth your babe, I in my experience find that mums that are either vegetarian or Vegan :ö) do seem to need less effort to birth their babes :ö)

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I also like to encourage you to take “Barley” grass (also known as the green powder), I find that it keeps your iron levels optimal and speeds up recovery after birth.

Trying to avoid long periods of sitting and avoiding driving where possible also helps with babes navigation :ö)

Natural ways to stimulate labour

Nipple Stimulation, by taking your nipples between your thumb and index finger and making circular movements (using a natural oil, like grapeseed or Almond) oxytocin is released into your body and this is the dominant hormone during childbirth, stimulating the muscles to contract.

Natural Prostaglandins: the male sperm contains natural prostaglandins which stimulate contractions and therefore Labour. Sexual intercourse, should this not be too uncomfortable, is therefore a very effective way of inducing labour.

Certain spices stimulate the onset of labour. A mixture of raspberry tea, clove, ginger and cinnamon can be consumed a sip or two at a time throughout the day. Otherwise a warm bath or “Belly” massage with one or a mixture of the following essential oils can also stimulate the onset of labour: Cinnamon, clove, ginger, verbena (these oils are quite potent and can cause a skin rash, if you react to one of them, just leave it away)

Homeopathic remedies; Caulophyllum alternated with pulstatilla 2 to 4 times a day is known to be quite successful. Otherwise other suggestions are Kalium Carbonicum, Gelsemium, Nux vomica, Scepia and Cimicifugia.

Schweppes Bitter Lemon contains Quinine, this used to be used to induce labour and can stimulate the onset of labour if consumed regularly, as can pineapple.

Regular walks, swimming or other exercise.

Foot reflexology, cranio sacral therapy and acupuncture are often also very successful and not at all harmful for mum and babe.

***Please do not take castor oil though it is commonly suggested by people, it is not good for your baby!**

Whilst awaiting the arrival of your baby, remember childbirth requires psychological as well as a physical energy and it is therefore important that you get sufficient rest and relax....**Labour is like watching a kettle that never boils!**