

Castor Oil to Induce Labor

How using castor oil can help you induce your labor.

Feb 2, 2007 Brenda Lane

Using castor oil is an effective way to induce labor. Yet castor oil induction can have negative side effects for some expectant mothers. Find out how to avoid problems.

How does castor oil work to induce labor?

When the bowels are stimulated, your body makes prostaglandins. These hormones are helpful to contract the smooth muscles of your body including the uterus. Some people also think that castor oil may work by causing dehydration, which is also known to stimulate contractions.

What is the best way to take castor oil?

Castor oil has a very unpleasant aroma and taste, so mothers might find it easier to take castor oil mixed with something else. There are also brands available which are flavorless and odorless. Recipes include mixing castor oil with orange juice, or into a smoothie or mixing it with eggs and then scrambling them. The recommended dosage can vary anywhere from 2 T to several ounces and then sometimes repeated. It is *very important* that you get the appropriate dosage amount from your midwife or obstetrician before trying any castor oil induction.

Are there disadvantages of using castor oil?

While castor oil can work very well to stimulate contractions, it can mean cramping, diarrhea and therefore having to stay near a bathroom for many hours. You can easily become dehydrated so it is important to increase your fluids if you plan to do a castor oil induction.

Another disadvantage is that you can have all the negative side affects (diarrhea and cramping)and still not go into labor. Or you go into labor quickly but continue to have loose bm's even hours after you give birth. Be sure you check with your provider and prepare for the downside of this type of induction. You may need to weigh the pros and cons of a castor oil induction versus a pitocin induction, since neither is ideal and they both can have disadvantages.