Holistic Methods for Induction and Augmentation

Holistic Induction Methods

Acupuncture

This traditional Chinese medicine involves the insertion of very fine needles into designated locations with the purpose of stimulating qi (energy) channels to stimulate labor. It is most likely to trigger labor if the mother is relaxed, and usually takes 1-3 sessions. Some studies show a success rate as high as 85%. Finding an acupuncturist skilled in pregnancy and labor increases the chances it will work.

Chiropractic Adjustment

Getting chiropractic visits throughout pregnancy helps prime the body for labor; however, an adjustment towards the end can definitely speed things along. Sometimes, labor doesn’t start because the baby is stuck in a bad position or isn’t putting enough pressure on the cervix. A chiropractic adjustment can cause a release of the hormone relaxin, which can help the pelvic muscles open up and expand in preparation for birth. This opening up can help the baby wiggle down to where he or she needs to be for birthing. Even a lower back adjustment can do wonders for helping to induce labor. A tense back and pelvic area are common problems for the end of pregnancy and can get the baby wedged into a position that doesn’t start labor. A chiropractic adjustment may help the baby drop down into the pelvis, giving your body the signal to start labor.

Labor Tincture

Labor tincture is taken under the tongue frequently to stimulate contractions. Often takes 24 hours to start contractions. Typically contains Black Cohosh, Blue Cohosh, Lobelia and Ginger Root. Helps to initiate labor or re-start a stalled labor. Note: Do not use until the last part of pregnancy to avoid starting premature labor, and not for use while nursing. In rare cases, the Blue Cohosh in the combination may either raise or lower blood pressure. Read the directions and warnings before use.

Massage/ Acupressure

A massage therapist (who should be experienced in induction massage and acupressure) work on acupressure points which are normally avoided during pregnancy, which can trigger labor. As with normal massage, induction massage helps to relax and calm your body, easing tension and helping to create a clear and grounded space. The therapists also may use essential oils which can assist with labor induction. It can be a successful form of labor induction if the body/baby is ready and the mother is willing.

Nipple Stimulation

Nipple stimulation produces Oxytocin. You can achieve nipple stimulation in many ways. You can gently stimulate the tip of the nipples, you can massage the areola and nipple as a baby would when suckling, you can have your partner suckle the breast, and you can try using a breast pump. There is the potential to create overly strong contractions with this method. Massage the first nipple for 5 minutes (when there are no contractions), then wait to see what happens (around 15 mins or so) before doing more. Once you have achieved regular contractions, stop using nipple stimulation.
Sex/ Orgasm

It may work to encourage labor when you are within a few days of going into labor on your own. Semen contains natural Prostaglandins that may help ripen the cervix and potentially increase the chance of labor. Orgasm releases high amounts of Oxytocin, the main hormone responsible for contractions.

Holistic Augmentation Methods
Same techniques used for Induction, listed above and

Calm Ready Mind

If the laboring women is afraid, anxious or tense she will be unable to release the proper hormones. Calming and relaxing the mind is just as important as the body. Avoiding situations and people that may cause distress will help keep the mind at peace. Creating the ideal environment will help the mind as well.

Gravity Enhancing Positions

Positions that increase the pressure of baby’s head on the cervix and open the pelvis will increase the strength and frequency of contractions. Squatting, walking, stair climbing, and sitting upright on a birthing ball may help in stimulating stronger, longer and more frequent contractions.

Increase Fluid Consumption

Dehydration can cause long, strong, frequent contractions that are not causing proper dilation. Dehydration can also cause weak, infrequent contractions as well. Having sips of water every few contractions can help avoid this issue. If you are using hydrotherapy, increase hydration by mouth.

Privacy, Warmth, Darkness

Women need to feel safe, relaxed and calm to produce the correct hormones for labor. Privacy, warmth and darkness help stimulate Melatonin and Oxytocin production, hormones necessary for strong frequent contractions.