

Wise
Woman

HERBAL

FOR THE **CHILDBEARING YEAR**



by Susun S. Weed

Childbirth

- Take 5-10 drops of **Echinacea** tincture, two or three times daily as a prophylactic against infection.

- The membranes may reseal spontaneously or with assistance. To encourage resealing lie down immediately. Move as little as possible for 48 hours. Observe and use the power of your thoughts and imagination. Focus on the sensation of the membranes. Visualize the torn edges merged, your amniotic fluid and fetus safely contained within the now whole caul. Drink Nettle, Comfrey, or Violet leaf infusions to encourage the healing. Don't look to see what's happening; be hysterically hygienic.

Unripe Cervix

Before natural labor will begin, your cervix must ripen. Your fingers can tell if your cervix is ripe. An unripe cervix feels like the tip of your nose; as it ripens, it gets softer, more tongue-like. If it is necessary to initiate labor and the cervix is not ripe, these two herbs, together or as simples, will usually hasten the ripening. CAUTION: Do not put your fingers or anything else in the vagina if the membranes are not intact.

*French for
sage fern*

- Taking **Evening Primrose oil**, three capsules daily for up to a week, may ripen the cervix.

- **Black Cohosh tincture**, 10 drops under the tongue hourly, will have a noticeable effect on the cervix in three or four hours. Continue until the cervix is fully soft and ripe.

- ★ **Nipple stimulation** is very effective for ripening the cervix and initiating labor. Have someone else suck continually on your nipple, or roll the nipple between your thumb and finger. You may need to continue for many hours to establish regular labor. It's fine to rest during a contraction and resume stimulation as it fades.

Initiating Labor

The herbs used to initiate labor are listed here in order of increasing strength. With the exception of Castor oil (and there is some disagreement on that), these herbs will not be effective unless the cervix is ripe. **CAUTION:** Do not try to initiate labor unless the fetus is at least 37 weeks gestational age.

- Get the uterus to begin contracting by "imagining" that it is. Don't try to force or push the feeling, just let it arise by itself. If your mind worries or focuses on the problem, gently return yourself to the solution by affirming that labor has begun and that you will feel it very soon. As with all **visualizations**, this one works well with any of the other remedies.

- Homeopathic **Caulophyllum 200x**, is reported as a good labor initiator. The dose can be repeated every half-hour for two hours.

- Labor can be initiated by stimulating the uterus. Rub the belly softly and persistently, with or without oil. Make an infusion of Blue Cohosh and use it as an enema. Have an orgasm. Rub and gently pinch the nipples. All are safe and effective ways to encourage uterine contractions.

★ **Castor oil**, a favorite herbal remedy of Edgar Cayce, is used internally and externally to stimulate the uterus, soften the cervix, and help initiate labor.

Rub Castor oil on the belly and cover with a warm towel if the cervix is ripe and labor seems near.

Or use Castor oil as a stimulating *purgative*. The dosage and procedure for starting labor with Castor oil varies considerably from midwife to midwife, but everyone uses some form of this treatment. Two ounces of Castor oil, two ounces of vodka, and two or more ounces of orange juice is the usual dose. This is often followed with a hot shower. After an hour, the dose is repeated and an enema is given. The dose is repeated a third time one hour later and another hot shower enjoyed. Labor will begin 3-5 hours after the last dose if all is well.

2oz. Castor oil
2oz. vodka
2oz. orange juice
Repeat up to
three times.

★ **Blue Cohosh tincture**, 3-8 drops in a glass of warm water or tea, is very effective in starting labor. Repeat every half-hour for several hours until contractions are regular. If labor is not underway in four hours, use a dropperful of the tincture under the tongue every hour for up to four more hours or until contractions are strong and consistent.

★ Homemade or commercial herbal labor tinctures, based on Blue Cohosh and supporting herbs, are commonly used as a safe and reliable way to initiate labor. Follow the directions on the tincture bottle or take 10 drops every hour until contractions begin. One midwife uses labor tincture hourly and homeopathic *Caulophyllum 200x* every half-hour. She says this establishes a smooth labor within five hours. Contractions build slowly when a labor tincture is used; do not discontinue until they become regular. See Appendix II - Labor Tincture.