



## Labour (Induction / acceleration)

**1 Modlock J, Nielsen B, Uldbjerg N. Acupuncture for the induction of labour: a double-blind randomised controlled study. BJOG 2010; DOI: 10.1111/j.1471-0528.2010.02647.x**

This double-blind multicentre randomised controlled study investigated whether acupuncture is effective for the induction of labour in post-term pregnancies. 125 healthy women with uneventful pregnancies at 41+6 weeks gestation were randomised into two groups. The intervention group received acupuncture twice on the same day at acupuncture point GV20 and bilaterally at points BL67, LI4 and SP6. The control group received sham acupuncture at the same points. Labour onset occurred in 7 women (12%) in the acupuncture group and 8 women (14%) in the control group. It was concluded from this study that acupuncture for induction of labour in post-term women at 41+6 weeks gestation may not be effective.

**2 Ingram J et al 2005 The effects of shiatsu on post-term pregnancy  
Complement Ther Med. 13(1):11-5**

This pilot study investigated the use of shiatsu for post-term pregnancy. 66 women at term were taught self-administration of shiatsu techniques to facilitate cervical ripening, and compared to 76 who were not. Of those who used shiatsu, spontaneous labour occurred in 17% more than in the control group. The acupoints used were Spleen 6, Gall Bladder 21 and Large Intestine 4.

**3 Gaudernack LC et al 2006 Acupuncture administered after spontaneous rupture of membranes at term significantly reduces the length of birth and use of oxytocin. A randomized controlled trial Acta Obstet Gynecol Scand. 85(11):1348-53.**

A randomised controlled trial in which 100 healthy women with spontaneous rupture of membranes at term, were randomly assigned to receive either

acupuncture or no acupuncture to assess the duration of active labour, incidence of induction and requirements for oxytocic acceleration. Labour duration was significantly reduced as was the use of oxytocin infusion to accelerate labour in the study group compared to the control group. Women in the acupuncture group who required induction had a significantly shorter active phase than the ones induced in the control group. These findings suggest that acupuncture may be effective for facilitating labour and delivery for women with spontaneous rupture of membranes at term.

**4 Harper TC et al 2006 A randomized controlled trial of acupuncture for initiation of labor in nulliparous women J Matern Fetal Neonatal Med. 19(8):465-70.**

This study aimed to explore the use of acupuncture for 56 primigravidae at 39 +4 weeks, with a single fetus and Bishop score below 7 who were randomized to receive either acupuncture at points Sp6, Li4, UB31 and UB32, or standard care. Although there was a generally shorter mean time to delivery (21 hours), more spontaneous labour and less likelihood of Caesarean section in the acupuncture group, the difference was not statistically significant. Of those who did not require induction, women in the acupuncture group were more likely to deliver vaginally than mothers in the control group. The findings generally suggest that acupuncture may have a role to offer in management of post-term pregnancies.

**5 Evans M 2009 Postdates pregnancy and complementary therapies Complement Ther Clin Pract. 15(4):220-4**

This review explores the use of self-help techniques and complementary therapies by women wishing to avoid post-dates pregnancy and medical induction of labour. There is increasing concern amongst many healthcare professionals about needless intervention in uncomplicated pregnancies, which detracts from the concept of birth normal. Induction of labour is not without risk and may contribute to iatrogenic complications when used in normal pregnancies, so should not be considered routine practice. However, there also needs to be a change in society's expectations of 'the expected date' and 'being overdue' so that it is not viewed as abnormal. Self-help techniques and the safe use of complementary therapies is critically explored, together with a more conservative approach to care for uncomplicated postdates pregnancy