

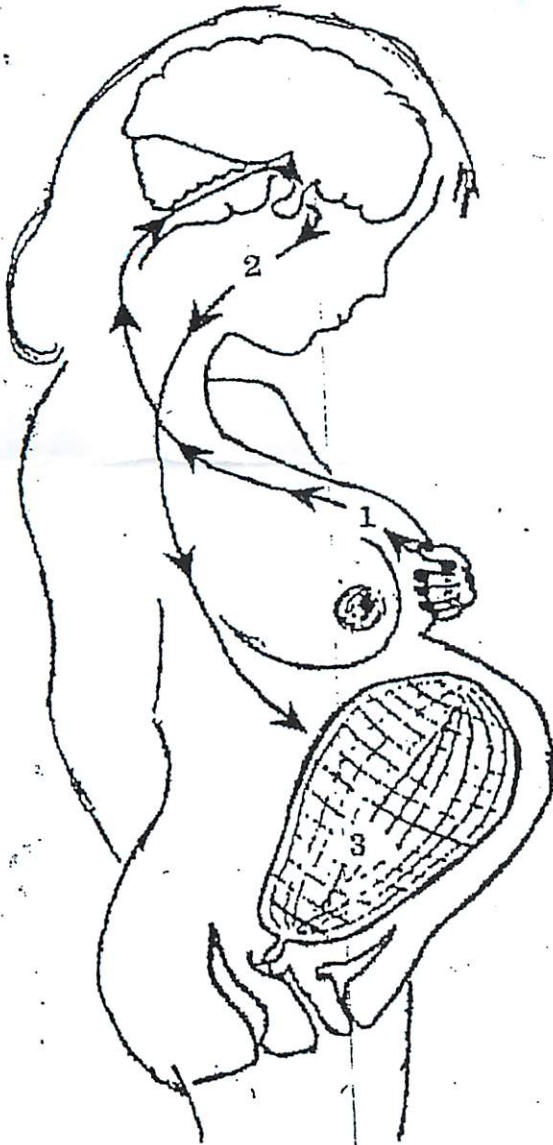
TALKING ABOUT How do experienced educators handle this one?

(If you have a topic you would like this column to answer, please let the editor know)

*How can I let couples know about non medically managed induction and enhancement of labour?
Thank you to both Julie and Lina for their contribution.*

Julie Clarke sent this handout. She uses it to explain to women who had gone 'overdue' one aspect of self help induction. Julie is happy for other educators to use the handout—please acknowledge her copyright if you reprint it for classes.

Nipple Stimulation



Why? To avoid going overdue, (and perhaps an induction), it is worthwhile to commence stimulating your nipples at the beginning of your 40th week. Nipple stimulation (1) causes the release of the hormone oxytocin from the hypothalamus in the Pituitary gland (2) in the brain. Oxytocin acts on the cervix by softening and ripening it for labour. Oxytocin also stimulates the uterus (3) to contract once the cervix is fully ripe.

When? morning is preferable to night-time because if labour starts, then you've had a full night's sleep from the night before and can approach your labour refreshed instead of tired.

How? When stimulated, nipples often become erect. You will know or need to discover for yourself what works for you. Here are some suggestions:-

- ~ take a nipple between your thumb and forefinger and roll it gently,
- ~ pull down and out lightly from the areola and over the nipple causing it to stand out,
- ~ have your partner suck your nipples
- ~ use oils and creams of your choice to help massage the breast and nipple
- ~ express a little colostrum and rub it into the nipple lightly,

Set aside an hour each morning, stimulate one nipple for five minutes only, then have a 5 minute rest, stimulate the other nipple for 5 minutes, then have a 5 minute rest, before returning back to the first nipple. Keep going from one nipple to the other (with a rest in between) for an hour only. Be sure not to be too hard on yourself or they will become tender.

Keep nipple stimulation in mind if your labour seems to be slow (and augmentation is suggested) or if you need to hurry the pace along for any reason.