

Castor Oil

Midwives Brew

What is it?

Castor oil is derived from the seeds of the castor bean plant. When it is consumed, it stimulates uterine contractions and can start labour.

When is it indicated?

The purpose of taking castor oil is to initiate labour, often with the goal of avoiding a medical induction. For example, you might consider taking castor oil if you are:

- You are over 41 weeks pregnant;
- Your water has been broken for over 12 hours and labour hasn't started on its own; or
- You need an induction of labour for another reason, like gestational diabetes.

Is it safe?

Several studies have shown that castor oil does not increase the risk of cesarean section, instrumental delivery, or poor newborn outcomes. As with any intervention, however, there is always the possibility of rare complications. For that reason, castor oil is not recommended if you have had a prior cesarean section or if you are at risk of complications related to high blood pressure.

What are the side effects?

Nausea is a common side effect. Other possible side effects include vomiting, diarrhea, and fatigue.

What's the recipe?

Castor oil has an unpleasant taste, so it is often combined with other ingredients to reduce side effects and to make it more palatable.

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp castor oil
- 2 tbsp almond butter
- 1 cup apricot juice or mango juice
- 1 cup non-alcoholic sparkling wine

Instructions

Blend the castor oil, almond butter, and fruit juice; Drink the sparkling wine alongside the castor oil mixture within 30 minutes. It is best served cold with a straw and taken on an empty stomach. Afterwards, eat something light and nourishing, and repeat in 4-5 hours if needed.

Will it work?

Research has shown that castor oil significantly increases the chance of going into labour within 24 hours. Castor oil works best for those who have already given birth, whose water is broken, who are past their due date, and/or whose cervix is already at least 2cm dilated.

