



With Lisa Leger

The Wellness Report

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"Putting Together a Herbal and Homeopathic Labour Kit"

There is something about pregnancy that makes natural remedies more appealing. Possibly a protective instinct is at work as we eat healthier foods, avoid chemicals, and take nutritional supplements and herb teas. By their due dates, many mothers are interested in using herbs and homeopathy to help with labour and delivery.

Medicinal herbs in the form of teas have been used throughout human history. One of the most renowned is red raspberry leaf tea which is a uterine tonic that can be taken throughout pregnancy and during labour. The aptly named motherwort and squaw vine are both helpful herbs for women during labour as well as with hormonal conditions like menstrual cramps or menopause.

Blue cohosh or black cohosh (caulophyllum) are the top herbs for labour; they are used interchangeably, although the black cohosh is thought to be stronger. They act to strengthen uterine contractions and can be used to stimulate a sluggish labour.

A Herbal Brew for Labour would include:

motherwort, squaw vine, raspberry leaf, yarrow (for exhaustion), or skullcap (for pain).

Note: Be sure to discuss the use of this or any other remedy with your birth attendants ahead of time.

Energizing foods can really help keep your stamina up during labour as well. I arranged to have a friend at my home birth whose job it was to keep me fueled with carrot and beet juice, healthy meals, and fortifying miso soups. A nutritious green drink like Greens + or an Alfalfa

Homeopathy is a unique form of natural medicine. Herbs, minerals, or animal products are diluted in water many times until vibrational medicines of various potencies are produced. For acute situations such as labour, a relatively low potency is usually used. Again, consulting a practitioner or having a birth attendant who is knowledgeable about using homeopathy is important. Since hospital staff have no formal training in natural medicines, it is wise to review your intention to use them prior to the birth to avoid disputes. Homeopathic preparations are given the latin name of the substance used to make it. One example is caulophyllum, which is a homeopathic form of cohosh. It is used to promote smooth muscle contractions.

Some helpful homeopathic remedies are:

CHAMOMILLA - helps relax muscles and reduces sensitivity to pain.

GELSEMIUM - helps with anxiety, fear, trembling legs, diarrhea.

PULSATILLA - indicated for false labour or pain with weak, irregular contractions. Also shyness, weepy, emotional extremes.

ARNICA - helps prevent bruising. Treats fatigue and exhaustion.

COFFEA - helps cope with sensitivity to pain and noise. Good for emotional excitement, fear of death.

BELLIS PERENUS - treats trauma to abdominal area (e.g. c-section)

KALI CARB - aids repair to haemorrhoids from the birth.

Tonic would also help with recovery in the postpartum days.

Another handy trick was recommended to me by Dr. Carolyn DeMarco when I was preparing for my delivery. She suggested that I take some calcium and magnesium at the onset of labour to help relax the muscles (it also helps relax the nervous system).

For anxiety or panicky feelings, the Bach Flower combination "Rescue Remedy" in your drinking water is very helpful for keeping calm. At one point, my husband, my midwife, and I were all sipping it.

Read about the remedy in a book about homeopathy and make sure it describes your condition; the closer the match, the more likely it is that the remedy is right for you. It is a good idea to put together a kit of remedies that you feel you are likely to need. If you think that natural medicines could help you with stamina and confidence in childbirth, then do some research and preparation ahead of time and feel free to bring along a little help from mother nature.

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