

**Acupuncture for birth preparation and labor induction****Sonia Argiles**

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The benefits of acupuncture in pregnancy and childbirth are well known. The interest by women and health professionals in using acupuncture grows significantly. Several studies illustrate the potential of research to promote the safety and effectiveness of acupuncture in pregnancy. Birth preparation through acupuncture cause a shorter period of dilatation due to favorable ripening of the cervix according to some research. Treatment is given once a week from 37 or 38 weeks until delivery. There are a variety of reasons why a woman is advised to have her labor induced, such as: Post-term babies (over 41 weeks); premature rupture of membranes without contractions; women with medical health problems. The art of acupuncture for induction of labor lies in the correct selection of the most effective points for the individual situation. From the perspective of TCM, birth is a yang condition (function), Qi flows freely and moves blood and the door of the uterus opens. When Qi flows correctly and the blood circulates well, a harmonious labor follows with the onset of contractions, dilatation of the cervix, and rupture of the waters and the expulsion of the fetus. Daily treatment during 30 minutes for three days is required to induce labor. (Betts, 150). A Cochrane review reports that there is a need for well-designed randomized controlled trials to evaluate the role of acupuncture to induce labor and the trials to assess clinically meaningful outcomes. Master Tung's points and others distal ones are used in my clinical practice to induce labor with a very effective result. Acupuncture for induction and preparing birth is becoming more of a common choice for mothers looking for a natural approach to getting their labor experienced started.

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