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**Evening Primrose Oil for Cervical Ripening**

In Australia in 2021, 44% of primiparous women had their labour induced. Recent research reveals induction of labour (IOL) is associated with a cascade of interventions, increased epidural rates together with higher rates of operative birth, perineal trauma, and neonatal morbidities.

International research with level one findings suggests that Evening Primrose Oil (EvPO) aids in cervical ripening, resulting in significantly improved Bishop’s scores, reduced labour duration, fewer caesareans and inductions using syntocinon. There are also no outpatient induction methods available in Australia. EvPO could allow women control over their induction and the ability to relax in their own homes during the latent phase of labour. Australian research on EvPO’s effects is lacking.

The purpose of this translational research project is to examine the outcomes of using EvPO for cervical ripening among primiparous women with a view to altering current policy and practice.

An ethics-approved locally based double-blind randomised controlled trial with a multifaceted approach will evaluate the effects of EvPO on cervical ripening of low-risk primiparous women at term. Clear exclusion criteria will ensure patient safety. Maternal and neonatal outcomes will be monitored. Potential benefits include reduced hospital admission times, decreased hospital overheads, improved birth outcomes and maternal satisfaction with care.

The trial’s findings will inform local policy and create opportunities for future evidence-based research opportunities. In a maternity model that puts timelines on gestation, and with increasing IOL rates, EvPO may be an effective, safe, and affordable method to achieve cervical ripening prior to birth.

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