

Your body has everything it needs to birth your baby, but some women find it helpful to add an herbal labor prep regimen to their routine in the last weeks of pregnancy. Herbal labor prep regimens use time-tested herbal combinations that help “prime the pump” to get your body in optimal condition for labor, birth, and postpartum. Midwives have used these preparations to help ease labor and delivery by increasing the effectiveness of contractions, producing larger cervical dilation before discomfort begins. Also, herbal labor preparation may help to minimize postpartum bleeding. Birth by Design recommends four herbal labor preparation regimens as an *optional* supplement to add starting at 34 weeks.

Dr. Christopher’s Prenatal Formula

Where Do I Get It?

Peggy’s website or Herbs First
(www.herbsfirst.com)

What’s In It?

Squawvine, Blessed Thistle, Black Cohosh Root, Pennyroyal, False Unicorn Root, Red Raspberry Leaf, and Lobelia, all in a vegetarian capsule.

How Do I Take It?

First week, take one capsule daily.
Second week, two capsules daily.
Third week, take two capsules three times per day and thereafter until birth.

How Much Does It Cost?

Prices vary from about \$16.50 to \$22.50 for 100 Capsules. You’ll need two bottles to use for the entire six weeks. Currently, the Herbs First website offers a discount when you buy two bottles, so the price would be \$31.50 for 200 Capsules.



Polly-Jean Five-Week Antenatal Formula

Where Do I Get It?

Birth Junkie (www.birthjunkie.com)

What’s In It?

Squawvine, Blue Coshosh, Blessed Thistle, Red Raspberry Leaf, False Unicorn, Motherwort, Wild Ginger, Lobelia, Wild Yam, Bayberry Root Bark

How Do I Take It?

First Week, two capsules twice daily, before meals. Increase the second week to two capsules, three times a day. Increase the third and fourth weeks up to about three or four capsules, three times a day until delivery.

How Much Does It Cost?

\$32 for 400 capsules (more than you’ll use)



Nature’s Sunshine 5W

Where Do I Get It?

Naturally Herbs (www.naturallyherbs.com)

What’s In It?

Black Cohosh Root, Squawvine, Dong Quai Root, Butcher’s Broom Root, Red Raspberry Leaf



How Do I Take It?

Two capsules three times daily until birth.

How Much Does It Cost?

\$16.25 for 100 Capsules. You’ll need three bottles to last 6 weeks, so the total cost would be \$48.75

Evening Primrose Oil

Taking Evening Primrose Oil orally and/or vaginally can also help your body prepare for labor. As an oral supplement, the essential fatty acids encourage the production of prostaglandins, which stimulate cervical ripening. In vaginal use, the natural prostaglandins in Evening Primrose Oil also help your cervix get ready for labor.

Where Do I Get It?

For your convenience, you can order Evening Primrose Oil, as well as many other supplements Peggy recommends, on Peggy’s website at www.birthbydesign.org. Evening Primrose Oil is also widely available in health food stores like Whole Foods and Healthway, as well as online e-tailers. Look for one that is hexane free.

How Do I Take It?

Orally, you may take three 500mg capsules or one 1300mg capsule per day. Vaginally, you may insert 3000–4500mg each evening at bedtime. For vaginal use, you may find the larger (1300mg) capsules easier to use. As your body heat dissolves the capsule, you may have some leaking and may want to use a mini-pad to catch any oil that might leak while you sleep.