



## Vivante Midwifery

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### Evening Primrose Oil for Ripening the Cervix

Evening primrose oil is the oil from the seeds of the Evening Primrose. The plant is tall, yellow and grows wild over much of the United States. It has pretty yellow flowers that bloom late day and evening, hence the name. There are many varieties of the plant and each has its own fragrance. Preliminary research suggests that it may be helpful in softening the cervix prior to labor. The active ingredient is linoleic acid, which is found in many foods. Linoleic acid helps make prostaglandins, which are the chemicals made by your body when it is getting ready for labor. Evening Primrose Oil (EPO) has been used to treat symptoms that occur in eczema, cystic fibrosis, multiple sclerosis, and attention deficit disorder, as well as other medical problems. There is a great deal of research on it, but no good research about whether it truly helps prevent pregnant women from going way past their due date or whether women who take it have cervical changes that make them more ready for labor than women who don't take it. There are no identified side effects.

EPO must be taken with Vitamin E in order to be adequately absorbed in the gut. There are two high-quality brands that already have Vitamin E in the capsule: **Enfamol** and **Nature's Way**. They are sold at GNC (General Nutrition Center) stores and perhaps in other stores. The Enfamol brand is the one that has been used the most in research studies because of its quality. The oil will be in capsules when you buy them. Check the **mg** of the capsules and **compare the price**. This is not inexpensive, but sometimes there is a **BIG** difference in price per mg. It may be cheaper to buy the 500mg size instead of the 1000mg (same as 1 gram) and use 2 of them. In the body, the substances in the plant's seed oils break down and help form prostaglandin, which helps ripen (soften) the cervix.

### Dosage

To use for ripening the cervix: Take 1000mg (1 gram) three times a day by mouth.

- If capsules are 500 mg each, take 2 capsules three times a day for a total of 6 capsules per day.
- If the capsules are 100 mg or 1 gram, take 1 capsule three times a day for a total of 3 capsules per day.
- If the capsules are 1200, 1300 or 1500 mg each, take 1 capsule twice a day for a total of 2 capsules per day.