

# Early labor at home

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For most women spending the early part of labor at home is recommended and safe. During early labor it is important to save your energy by resting, eating and drinking. Early labor can be frustrating because it is difficult to know when to go to the hospital. This is a normal part of labor.

## **What should I do at home?**

- Snack on small amounts of light, easily digested foods
- Drink/eat at least 16 ounces of fluids with energy each hour (juice, popsicles, broth, Gatorade®, pop without caffeine)
- Some women may feel nauseous and even vomit during labor, this is normal. Wait a short while and continue to drink.
- Alternate walking with taking a shower and resting
- If your contractions allow, try to sleep. Sometimes a warm bath or using a heating pad will help you relax enough to fall asleep for a short while.
- Remember that your support people should rest, eat and drink, too!

## **What do labor contractions feel like?**

Contractions feel like very painful menstrual cramps in the low abdomen, pelvis, hips, low back and upper thighs. They build to a peak and then they go away.

## **How do I time my contractions?**

Start at the beginning of one contraction and time until the beginning of the next contraction.

## **When and where do I call when I'm in labor?**

Call Triage at 734 764-8134 or as instructed by your health care provider when your contractions are painful and regular. A general guideline of when to call is:

- For first labor: contractions every 3 to 5 minutes, lasting 60 seconds for an hour
- For all other labors: contractions every 5 to 7 minutes, lasting 60 seconds for an hour

## **What are other reasons to call Triage?**

- Big gush or steady trickle of watery discharge from your vagina (you may have broken your bag of waters)
- Heavy, bright red bleeding like a period. A small amount of red, pink or brown blood or "bloody show" is normal, especially after a vaginal exam.
- Continuous, severe, sharp abdominal pain that doesn't stop after 3 - 5 minutes
- Absent or decreased fetal movement
- If you can't eat or drink, are exhausted, can't cope with the pain or have questions or concerns

## **Additional Instructions**

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