For most women the early part of labor, before active labor, is best spent at home. During early labor it is important to save your energy for later by resting and eating and drinking. These are some suggestions that have helped other women:

- 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 the 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 coach should rest, eat and drink, too!

Labor contractions feel like very painful (you can’t walk or talk during them) menstrual cramps in the low abdomen, pelvis, hips, low back and upper thighs.
They build to a peak and then they ease and go away. To time how often your contractions are coming, start at the beginning of one contraction and time until the beginning of the next contraction. Duration of your contraction is the time each contraction lasts (the start to the end of one contraction).

Call Triage at 734 764-8134 or call your nurse-midwife when:

- Your contractions are painful and regular:
  - coming every 3 to 5 minutes, lasting 60 seconds for an hour for a first labor
  - coming every 5 to 7 minutes, lasting 60 seconds for an hour for all other labors

- 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

إذا كنت لامستطيعي الأكل أو الشرب وكنت مرهقة ولا تستطيع تحمل الألم أو لديك أسئلة أو استفسارات.

Additional Instructions:

توجيهات إضافية:

Women’s Hospital Birth Center Triage
مركز استقبال الولادة بمستشفى النساء
500 E. Medical Center Drive
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-0256
734-764-8134

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by UMHS and for which UMHS does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: Women’s Hospital Birth Center Triage
Translation: UMHS Interpreter Services

Patient Education by University of Michigan Health System is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. Last Revised 12/2009