

Pacific Midwifery Practice

Labour: What to Expect and When to Call as Birth Approaches

Please make sure we have your current address and phone number!

What to expect in late pregnancy:

When the long awaited event of your labour and baby's birth is finally near you may wonder what you should do and when you should call your midwife.

During the days and early hours before your baby's birth you may experience physical changes. These changes are normal and they are signs that your body is getting ready for your baby's birth.

What might I notice?

- increased Braxton Hicks (false labour contractions they feel like a tight band around your middle)
- increased pelvic pressure –the baby “drops” into your pelvis
- loose bowel movements
- increased back discomfort
- the need to pee more often
- restless sleep
- mucousy, blood stained discharge called “show”
- you may see your mucous plug (usually brown and sticky)

We know that in the early stages of labour the best place for you and your family to be is in the comfort of your own home. The following information suggests ways to stay comfortable during this time and provides guidelines on when to call your midwife.

Comfort Measures in Early Labour

- **Rest and Activity:** continue with light as long as you are comfortable. Walking often relieves discomfort while at the same time promotes labour. However it is as important to balance activity with rest. Try to sleep or nap intermittently.
- **Food and Drink:** we suggest you eat light, easy to digest meals. Most important is to drink plenty of fluids, ensure at least 8 oz. every hour.
- **Pain Relief:** as your contractions become stronger, begin to use your breathing and relaxation exercises. Various positions are helpful at different times: sitting, standing, walking, side lying or kneeling; try to find what best works for you. Hands and knees eases discomfort of backache. Other things to try are warm baths (avoid if your water has broken), showers, TENS, hot or cold packs.

How do I know if I am in “true”labour?

1. Are you having contractions or tightenings that are gradually getting longer, stronger and closer together.

Discomfort or pain caused by tightening of your uterus is called a contraction. However not all contractions of the uterus mean that labour has begun. “Braxton Hicks” (also called false labour) are different from “true labour” because these contractions are not usually regular and will stop. On the other hand throughout “true”labour your contractions will become more frequent, more regular and more painful. You may also have back pain.

2. Has the water sac around your baby broken?

The (sac) also called the membranes, surrounding your baby contains fluid called amniotic fluid. This sac can break and the fluid will leak from your vagina. You may feel a trickle, or it may appear in a sudden gush. If you are unsure if your water has broken put on a sanitary napkin; if it is wet an hour or so later your water has probably broken. The colour of the fluid should be clear.

MY LABOUR IS STARTING WHAT DO I DO NOW?

NOTIFY YOUR MIDWIFE

PLEASE LET US KNOW BETWEEN 8am-10pm IF YOU THINK YOU COULD BE IN EARLY LABOUR.

Stay at home until labour is active

- the comfort of home is the best place for you and your family to be in early labour.
- if possible surround yourself with people who can support you and keep you relaxed.

Time your contractions.

- If you think your contractions are becoming regular, time them for a while to see if a pattern has begun.
- Count the minutes that go by from the beginning one contraction to the beginning of the next. Also time how long each contraction lasts.
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After 10:00 pm please call your midwife for any of the following:

FIRST BABY (3-2-1)

3 Mins Apart	X	1 Minute	X	1 or 2 Hours
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Contractions are occurring every 4 minutes, lasting 1 minute for 1 hour. (4 minutes from the beginning of one contraction to the beginning of the next)

Second or subsequent baby

5 Mins Apart	X	60 Seconds
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Contractions are occurring every 5 minutes, lasting for 45-60 seconds.

Call immediately if any of the following occur:

- You feel constant abdominal pain that does not go away.
- Your water has broken and you develop a fever, feel hot or shivery.
- If your water breaks and you are Group B Strep positive (if at night call first thing in the morning)
- The fluid from your water sac is coloured green or brown (like the baby has had a bowel movement) * If your water breaks in the night and the water is clear or straw coloured and you don't have contractions or any other concerns you can call the midwife the following morning.
- You have fresh bright red bleeding from your vagina (soaking a pad).
- Your baby's movements have slowed down (less than six movements in a two hour period) or stopped.

Call your midwife as follows

Call: 604- 428-7982 For Clients of Terry Lyn Evans/Kirsten Taylor/Callaway Stephanson-Pate

Call: 604-727-4703 For clients of: **Susie Schulz**

Please do not leave urgent or labour-related messages for the midwives on call at the clinic number as they are not checked regularly.

1) If a situation occurs where you cannot reach your midwife:

Try another midwife on call for the practice / office hours call the office (604-874-7999).

OR Call BC Women's UCC (604-875-3070) or St Paul's (604 806-8349) let them know you are having difficulty reaching your midwife.

Postpartum Home Visits

After your birth your midwife will see you at home for scheduled visits in the first week.

Usually day 1 (home or hospital) day 3/or 4 and day 7. Please do not call for a appointment time. The midwife will call you - the home visit midwife is also juggling births and sleep. It is expected you are home recovering and available anytime- if you are out and about we ask you to book your visits with our admin and come to clinic.