

EARLY LABOR SIGNS

You might experience all of the following signs or almost none of them. Either way can be perfectly normal. Some of these things can occur a month prior to birthing! Try not to get discouraged if you are tired of waiting. The baby will come, sooner or later. Possible signs are: lightening, engagement, increase in vaginal secretions, slight weight loss, backache, diarrhea, loss of the mucous plug, waters breaking, cervical pressure and softening, effacing and dilation (ripening), contractions more frequent, more intense, fluctuating emotions, gastric disturbances. Achiness or congestion in the pelvic area, feeling "premenstrual", increasing swelling or heaviness in the vulva, shooting pains or cramps in the upper legs, and an energy spurt (the nesting instinct).

INSTRUCTIONS AFTER LABOR BEGINS

Notify me and other attendants, even if it is not time for us to come yet. Do not be alone.

Have all supplies in one place and ready for the birth.

Urinate frequently.

Eat lightly and be sure to drink at least one cup of fluids an hour.

Take a walk with someone.

Take a shower (or bath if you know that your bag of waters is intact).

Talk to your baby. Relax for each contraction, say thank-you, and ask for another one even stronger than the last.

Relax, relax, relax. Sleep if you can.

PRE-LABOR AND TRUE LABOR

Before the cervix begins to dilate, many women experience non-dilating contractions that may continue for hours or even days. Sometimes called "false labor," this pre-labor can be tiring and confusing. The following chart will help you decide if you are in true labor. If you are still unsure, however, call me.

TRUE LABOR AND PRE-LABOR

UTERINE CONTRACTIONS:

Pre-Labor: Tend to stay at about the same length, frequency and strength. Are usually not painful. If painful, the level stays about the same.

May last 1/2 to 4 minutes in duration.

Are affected by change in mother's activity; will subside as the mother becomes more active.

Recommendations: Take a warm bath or shower, eat something, go for a walk or sleep. Also do the balancing exercises from spinning baibes.com; sifting, inversion and side-lying release.

True Labor: Become longer, stronger and closer together with time.

Accompanied by abdominal discomfort or pain.

Rarely exceed 75 seconds in early labor.

Often accompanied by increasing backache and restlessness.

Are not reduced by mother's activity.

SHOW:

Pre labor: None.

True Labor: Bloody show is often present before or during early labor.

INTESTINAL SYMPTOMS:

Pre-Labor: None

True Labor: Frequent soft bowel movements, often mistaken for digestive upsets.

CHANGES IN THE CERVIX:

Pre-Labor: Effacement not progressive. Dilation not progressive.

True Labor: Progressive effacement or thinning. Progressive dilation.