



Signs That Labor Might Begin

Please note that these are only signs that labor might begin... it still may be a while before labor actually sets in or becomes established! Some women have almost all of the signs and some women have either few or none. Each labor is different; birth is magical, mystical and unpredictable.

- Mucous plug or bloody show.
- Loose stools or even a touch of diarrhea
- Cramping, almost as if your period is about to begin
- “Nesting”
- Surges (or a pre-menstrual feeling in the lower part of your belly) that are noticeable but usually irregular and usually do not last for very long. Uterine activity is intermittent and the surges vary in intensity; whereas in true active labor the uterus settles into a regular, rhythmic pattern of activity that continues and intensifies. Taking a warm, relaxing bath (candles and soft music add a nice touch) and/or changing position will often times “wipe out” prelabor, but if it is truly getting to be “baby-having time,” the surges will continue and become stronger.
- An increase in the amount of vaginal discharge
- Bag of water begins to leak or breaks. (Some women think this is happening but may be leaking urine) -Mood swings

Call immediately if you are experiencing any of the following at any time:

Nicole’s cell 781-812-9445

- Bleeding from the vagina
- A sudden gush of fluid from the vagina or you think that the bag of water is leaking or has released
- Meconium-stained fluid (brown, green, or black) is leaking from the vagina

- Blurred vision, dizziness, headaches or feeling disoriented
- Extreme nausea or vomiting
- Chills and fever over 100° Fahrenheit, not accompanied by a common cold
- Baby's hand, foot or cord appearing in the vagina
- Painful urination and/or burning when urinating
- Increasing swelling or puffiness in the hands, feet or ankles (especially if it is sudden)
- Sharp pain in uterus; severe abdominal pain (that does not let up)
- An extremely hot, cold or “clammy” feeling
- Absence of fetal movements for 12 hours, from the time that significant, daily movements are apparent and definitely after 24 weeks gestation.
- Increased, unusual thirst with reduced amounts of urine (or if you do not urinate for more that half a day despite normal fluid intake)
- Regular surges and think this might be labor
- Calls are returned promptly, so if urgent, please call our alternative numbers or call again if you have not received a return call within 15 minutes.

Baby-having Day (or Night):

When To Call

If you are certain that you are in active labor, then call, even if it is the middle of the night.

Please note that I ALWAYS call back within a few minutes. If you do not reach me, please call again. You will have the numbers of the assisting midwives, so you will always be able to get one of us when you need us.

If you THINK you are in labor and have no immediate questions, go back to sleep! We recommend that you do not wake your partner--you have the hormones to get you through labor but your partner may not. IF it is just practice labor than both of you will have been up an extra night; if it is the real labor that is going to bring the baby, you will know this in time and will of course waken your partner for support.

By the way, in general, we recommend--there are exceptions--that you don't call your family and friends when you are in early labor. This is a time for you to spend saying goodbye to your pregnancy and to the baby you have been carrying on the inside-- and a time to spend with your partner as you begin your final journey to parenthood. It is a time to relax, rest, take a walk and get ready to “do” the labor. Well- meaning family and friends are often so excited waiting for news about the baby's birth that they call frequently, stop by, text, etc. For them time seems to have stretched out and it feels as if it has been forever since they've gotten any news about the progress of your labor. It

saves them a lot of concern and pacing when you call them with the news that your baby is here and that all is well.

Although there are some variations, active labor is generally defined as surges (contractions) that have been occurring regularly for at least an hour or more, anywhere from approximately 4-5 minutes apart (counting from the beginning of one sensation to the beginning of the next) and lasting approximately 45 seconds to a minute. Moms who have birthed before should call as soon as they think that they are in labor.

It is important for us to speak directly to the birthing mother, to hear her voice, to find out her personal perception of what is happening and to make a better initial assessment of the labor. We typically do not need to be with you when surges are 10-15 minutes apart – this is a time when you can continue to rest, eat, read or walk, etc. It is a time when you can relax with your partner and await the onset of active labor.

We take many factors into consideration to mutually determine the best time to arrive at your home. Once we've decided that it is time, there are a number of things to remember. Often times, the assist or apprentice midwife may go to the woman's house first. She may help the mother in a variety of different ways: relaxation techniques, taking vital signs, listening to the baby, assessing the labor pattern, assessing dilation, suggesting positions for the mother that will help her labor to be as efficient and easy as possible as well as helping the mother (and partner) to remain relaxed and happy and peaceful! I may not be at my house (although when I am on call I am generally within two hours of my house) and may need to return home to get my birth bags, as I cannot leave them in the car because they are temperature sensitive. It may take longer to get to your house than it did for the home visit, depending on the traffic and weather conditions. We are most attentive and efficient, but it does take some time, all things considered, to get to you.

We want to arrive at just the right time. We don't want to be there too soon – i.e. you feel like a watched pot and as if you have to “produce” the surges and the baby; at the same time we don't want to be there past the point where you were wanting support and feeling uneasy because it's not there I often ask you if you feel ready to have us all there, if you feel as if having one person come and sit with you would work right now or if you are feeling relaxed on your own for the time being. Your perception, along with other information that I am gathering as I ask questions, helps us to arrive at a time that feels right for each individual situation.

I generally call my assistant midwife when a woman is approximately 6-7 centimeters, but this varies depending on a variety of factors (time of day, traffic, location, what number baby this is, previous birth history, etc.) If this is a second or third baby, for

example, and we expect a short labor, the entire birth team may all come to be with you at once as there is a bit of “setting up and settling down” to do once we arrive.

There have been some instances when we have gone to be with a woman in labor and determined that she wasn't in true labor, in which case we may leave and come back again, sometimes hours later, occasionally days or weeks later. However, at some point, your labor WILL become active and your baby will arrive.

Every birth is different. We have done our best to provide you with a list of the supplies you will need to have on hand for the labor, birth and postpartum period. However, if there is anything left over at your birth after your baby is born and you are willing to donate these items, we will then offer them to others who would appreciate this very much.

If Baby Arrives Before We Do... Note: this is very rare

- 1 Stay calm and relaxed!
- 2 Call us on our cell phones for instructions
- 3 Have mom get low to the ground or on a bed, so baby has a soft landing
- 4 Ensure that the room is warm (remember baby has been living in 99°)
- 5 Do not discourage pushing; simply remind mom to listen to her body
- 6 If you see a cord around baby's neck, gently stretch it over the head – “cords are necklaces not nooses”
- 7 After the baby is born, have mom hold the baby against her body with the baby's head slightly lower than the rest of his/her body being careful not to tug on the cord!
- 8 Cover the baby with dry blankets and keep him/her warm
- 9 Leave the umbilical cord alone until we arrive
- 10 If the placenta is delivered before we arrive lay it alongside mom and baby until we arrive.