



## Signs of Labor and When to Call Us

Communication is essential.

If you think you are in labor during normal business hours (Monday to Friday from 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM), call (703) 273-9440, x318. After hours & on weekends, call 1-888-724-3845. Unless it is urgent, please do not go to the hospital until you have contacted us.

The following are signs of normal labor. Please call us when:

You have regular, painful contractions lasting 30-60 seconds and...

- First-time moms: Contractions are 5 minutes apart.
- 2nd (or more) baby: Contractions are 10 minutes apart.
- Live more than one hour away or have a history of rapid labor?: Contractions are 10 minutes apart.
- Previous Cesarean and planning on TOLAC?: Contractions are 10 minutes apart.
- Your water breaks. This can feel like a sudden gush of fluid or a constant trickle. This should be CLEAR.
- If you are laboring at home, please let us know so that we can make sure you and your baby are safe.
- If you are in labor, please do not eat or drink anything.

The following symptoms are NOT normal. Please call us immediately if they occur. These are signs your baby may be under stress.

- Your water has broken and it is green or brown.
- You are bleeding, especially if it is heavy, like a period. (Passing the mucus plug is normal)
- You have a fever.
- Baby is not moving well.
- You are planning on having a Cesarean section and are having any labor pains.
- You are less than 36 weeks and are having any labor pains.
- You have symptoms of pre-eclampsia such as:
  - Strong headaches with changes in vision, especially seeing spots.
  - Swelling of the face & hands (swelling in the ankles alone is normal).
  - Vomiting with right upper abdominal pain.

**The Pediatrician:** It is time to choose a pediatrician! Ask us if you need a referral. Having a baby is a sacred time. If you are a member of faith, you may want to talk to your Priest, Minister, Rabbi, Mullah, etc., to visit you in the hospital. Nobody will automatically come.