

## ***WHAT TO EXPECT THE LAST FEW WEEKS OF PREGNANCY***

Congratulations, you have made it to your 34 week check up! At this point, we would like to remind you that we do not recommend travel after 36 weeks, however travel may be restricted earlier if medically indicated.

To help make your last weeks as pleasant as possible, here are a few suggestions:

- Realize and admit your limits. If you are tired, listen to your body and rest when you can.
- Drink plenty of water and electrolytes. Avoid caffeinated beverages, sodas, and other sugary drinks.
- Avoid processed foods. Salt causes water retention, which may lead to swelling and high blood pressure.
- Wear comfortable clothes. Supportive shoes and support garments such as belly bands may lessen the strain on your lower back.
- When you lie down, use a pregnancy pillow, or prop yourself up with lots of pillows.

**Pediatrician:** It is time to choose a pediatrician. Your baby is required to have a pediatrician before discharge.

## ***SIGNS OF LABOR & WHEN TO CALL***

If you think you are in labor during normal business hours (Monday – Thursday 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM, and Friday 8:00AM – 3:00PM), **call (703) 273-9440 & select ‘OPTION 6’**. After hours & on weekends, **call 1-888-724-3845**.

**Communication is essential.**

**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
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> (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

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 heavily like a period. Passing the mucus plug and a small amount of blood 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 no improvement with Tylenol
  - Changes in vision (double vision, seeing spots)
  - Swelling of the face & hands (swelling in the ankles alone is normal)
  - Vomiting with right upper abdominal pain

**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.