

Signs & Symptoms of Labor

This list is designed to help you become aware of the various symptoms of labor you may experience. It is important to remember that not all women display the same signs of oncoming labor. If you are concerned about symptoms you are experiencing or have any questions, please contact our midwife on call at **(608) 441-1730** or the Meriter Birthing Center's triage line at **(608) 417-6228**.

Are You Registered at Meriter? - Save yourself time by pre-registering online. Visit www.meriter.com and select *pre-registration* on the **Patients & Visitors** tab. You **MUST** be registered in order for us to complete your information prior to your delivery. Please don't delay.

How to Time Contractions - Time in minutes from the beginning of one contraction to the beginning of the next contraction. There are several smart phone apps available!

Signs and Symptoms of True Labor

- Contractions are five minutes apart or closer for over one to two hours.
- Time between contractions becomes shorter.
- Discomfort increases - you have difficulty walking or talking through contractions.
- Bloody show (discharge).
- Rectal pressure - feeling as if you need to have a bowel movement.
- Remember the "511" rule. Contractions are "5" minutes apart, lasting "1" minute long for "1" hour.

Signs and Symptoms of False Labor

- Contractions are irregular (come and go) and do not get stronger.
- Contractions subside or are less frequent when resting.
- Time between contractions may remain the same or contractions become farther apart.
- No cervical change when examined by the midwife.
- Losing your mucus plug is not a sign of labor.

Signs and Symptoms that Require IMMEDIATE Evaluation in Triage

- Bag of water breaks. Even if contractions are NOT present, please call the midwife on call to form a plan of care. A gush of fluid or a steady trickle that you can't control, are both signs your water may have broken.
- Constant, severe abdominal pain.
- Bright red vaginal bleeding, like a period, or clots.
- Constant rectal pressure.
- Decreased baby movement or kicks - you count less than eight in two hours.
- Continued or severe headache.
- Blurring of vision or spots before your eyes.
- Chills/fever.
- Fainting spell or loss of consciousness.
- Severe or continued nausea and/or vomiting.



Remember: If you have any **questions or are unsure about whether you are in labor**, contact our clinic or the midwife on call at **(608) 441-1730** or the Meriter Birthing Center's triage line at **(608) 417-6228**.

What to Do When Labor Begins

Call the on call midwife at the clinic phone number (608-441-1730)

Your Arrival At The Hospital

Meriter Hospital's main entrance and lobby are open 24 hours a day. Therefore, anytime you arrive at the hospital, park in any visitor area in the ramp. (If you do not feel comfortable walking from the ramp, you can park temporarily in the drive in front of the main lobby doors. Your spouse or support person can move the car after you are admitted.) Go to the 4 North triage area where you will be assessed. If the doors to the main entrance are locked, security will let you through and you can proceed to OB triage.

The Meriter Birthing Center

202 S. Park Street
Madison, WI 53715

Location: 4, 5 & 6 North

Birthing Center Triage Line: (608) 417-6228

Breastfeeding Helpline: (608) 417-6547, 1-800-261-4449