

### *Sign and Symptoms-When to Call the Doctor*

1. Regular contractions occurring 3-5 minutes apart, lasting 40-60 seconds. Time your contractions from the beginning of one contraction to the beginning of the next. The duration is how long the contraction lasts (usual contractions last 25-60 seconds). You may feel a tightening in the abdomen or just pressure in your back. Some women just feel a sensation in their upper thighs. Regardless of how you feel, check the contraction by pushing in on your abdomen with your hands.
2. If it is hard, even "rock like", then it is probably a contraction. True labor contractions are painful. They usually require that you breathe through them, unlike false labor, which is usually not painful. Contractions of true labor have three characteristics: they get longer, stronger, and closer together. False labor goes away with activity, such as walking.
3. Call anytime your water breaks, even if you are not contracting. This may be sudden flush or slow constant leak of fluid. Amniotic fluid may be colorless or even blood-tinged. If you are in doubt, always call. Do not delay in letting us know.
4. Any bleeding more than just spotting. It is not unusual to have some spotting after a cervical exam. You do not need to call for this. However, any bleeding heavier than spotting requires a call to us. You do not need to call if you pass your mucus plug. As the cervix "ripens", and the canal flattens out (effacement), the honeycomb structure known as the "mucus plug" comes out. This may happen all at once or slowly with the resemblance of discharge. It may be yellowish, whitish, or even blood-tinged. The loss of the mucus plug or a small amount of bloody show is not a true sign of labor. In summary, heavy vaginal bleeding, painful or painless, should be reported.

Call the office phone (309-692-2025) during the day, night or weekends. Our answering service will page the physician or midwife on call. Give your name, what number baby this is for you, your contraction pattern and due date. Also, give additional information that is pertinent to your care such a breech, scheduled for a C-Section, having twins, water leaking, history of rapid labors or you reside a long distance from the hospital.

Also, it is important to be pre-registered at the hospital where you are delivering. Simply call the appropriate phone numbers around 36 weeks gestation to pre-register.

OSF: 309-683-6751

Unity Point: 309-671-5113

Lastly, 36 weeks gestation is the perfect time to start packing your bag for the hospital. Important items to include are nightgown or pajamas (loose fitting), robe, slippers, support bra or nursing bra, toiletries, camera, outfit for baby's hospital picture, special baby blanket, and the car seat.