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Obstetrics and Gynecology

Labor Precautions

Labor is different for every woman and it can be difficult to tell exactly what labor will feel like. This is a basic list of what to look for when you are in the third trimester. Please call the office at 214-764-5585 during office hours or the After-Hours Emergency line in the evening or on the weekends at 214 360 5608. If you have questions, feel as though you are in labor, or are heading to the hospital- please call first to update the physician.

Call your Doctor for any of the following four:

1. **CONTRACTIONS:** It is normal for you to have contractions on and off in late pregnancy. They may occur high in the abdomen, low or in the back. Braxton-Hicks contractions are typically short (30 seconds or less), irregular, and usually feel like “Tightening” but not painful. To count your contractions, start from the beginning of the pain or tightening to the beginning of the next. If the contractions are 5 minutes apart or closer together and stay that way for at least one hour, call your doctor. Also, If you have continuous contraction that does not subside or any contractions that are too painful to wait, call your doctor.
2. **WATER BREAKING-** Most women have their water break after they are contracting, but sometimes the water breaks without any contractions. Call us immediately if you think your water has broken, regardless of whether you are having contractions. Water breaking is usually an obvious gush of clear fluid. Sometimes it is discolored or just a little trickle down the leg. If in doubt- call your doctor.
3. **BLEEDING-** You may have a small spot or streaks of blood if you lose your mucous plug or start contracting. You also may have a small amount of spotting after having your cervix checked or after intercourse. Any bleeding at any other time or any bleeding that is bright red or as heavy or heavier than a period should be reported to your doctor immediately.
4. **FETAL MOVEMENTS-** Your baby may be slowing down a little as you approach labor, but the baby should still be moving. Pay attention to the baby’s movements every day. The baby may have an hour or two of rest but then start moving again. If the baby is moving less than you normally perceive, then lay down and pay attention to the baby’s movements for an hour. If the baby does not move 10 times in one hour, call your doctor.

A final word about the Mucous Plug: You may or may not see mucous come out of your vagina late in pregnancy. Some Women see mucous several times and, sometimes, it is streaked with a small amount of blood. Losing the mucous plug without any of the four signs noted above does not mean that you are in labor. Do NOT let this alarm you.