



Comfort in Early Labour

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Congratulations - the long awaited event of your labour and baby's birth is finally here. We believe that the best place for you and your family to be in your early stages of labour is in the comfort of your own home. The following information suggests ways to stay comfortable during this time and also provides guidelines to assist you in your decision for when to return to the hospital.

We encourage you to relax and enjoy this special time preparing for your baby's birth.

Comfort Measures in Early Labour

- ▶ **Rest and Activity:** continue with light activity as long as you are comfortable. Walking often relieves discomfort while at the same time promotes labour. However, it is important to balance this activity with rest. Try to sleep or nap intermittently if possible but otherwise rest and relax.
- ▶ **Food and Drink:** we suggest you eat light, easily digested meals. You may find smaller more frequent snacks are better tolerated. Most importantly, drink plenty of fluids, ensuring at least one glass every hour. Be sure to avoid alcohol, products containing caffeine and ginseng.
- ▶ **Pain Relief:** as your contractions become stronger, begin to use your breathing and relaxation exercises. Various positions are helpful at different times - sitting, standing, walking, sidelying or kneeling - try to find which works best for you. A hands and knees position is particularly beneficial for easing the discomfort of backache. Other measures include massage, warm baths, showers, TENS, and hot or cold packs.

Do not take any pain medication during this time unless advised by your doctor/midwife.

Developed by:
Delivery Suite Family Education Subcommittee June 1994

Approved by: The B.C. Women's Hospital
Family Education Advisory Committee

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TELEPHONE IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCUR ...

- ▶ your water breaks, especially when the water is any colour other than clear (i.e. green or brown);
- ▶ you have been discharged from the hospital with broken waters and you suddenly have a temperature, feel hot or shivery;
- ▶ you have any bright red vaginal bleeding;
- ▶ you have constant abdominal tightness/pain that does not go away;
- ▶ this is your first baby and your contractions are occurring regularly every 3-4 minutes apart, lasting for 45-60 seconds for 1-2 hours;
- ▶ this is your second or subsequent baby and your contractions are occurring every 5 minutes, lasting for 45-60 seconds for one hour;
- ▶ your labour pains (contractions) are unrelieved by comfort measures;
- ▶ you have any other concerns.

Who to telephone:

- ▶ First call your Doctor or Midwife
- ▶ If you are unable to reach your doctor/midwife, call B.C. Women's Hospital Assessment Room 604-875-3070