



Early vs. Active Labour

Going into labour is a very exciting time!

Here are some tips to figure out if you are in early or active labour and what to do. Be sure to follow your midwives' instructions with when to page if they are different from below.

	Early Labour	Active Labour
Contraction pattern: How often are they? How long are they?	No regular pattern. Some far apart others closer together. Contractions are short (less than 45-60 seconds). When contractions are not consistent and are more than 4 minutes apart ... stop timing them and focus on rest!	Regular pattern 4-1-1 ✓ minutes from the start of one contraction to the start of the next one ✓ each contraction is 45 sec to 1 minute long ✓ this pattern has continued for 30min- 1 hour
Contraction strength	Some positions (walking, bath, resting) make contractions ease up or go away.	All contractions are strong no matter what you do now!
What am I doing during a contraction	Can still talk through all or some contractions.	You have to breathe and focus through contractions.
What am I thinking	"Labour isn't so bad" "Should we give the midwives a heads up?"	"I am not having fun" "The contractions are strong and keep coming again and again"
What is happening at this stage	Softening, shortening and opening the cervix	Cervix is now 4cm dilated and will continue to dilate 0.5-1cm/hour
How long will this stage last	Many hours to days	6-12 hours until it is time to push
What to do	If it is DAY: Ignore it! Be restful – Be mobile - Take a bath - Take a nap - Take a walk - Watch a movie - Drink lots of fluids - Eat foods rich in carbohydrates and protein. If it is NIGHT: Try to sleep between contractions. Turn out the lights. Take 1000mg acetaminophen (2 extra-strength Tylenol). Take 50-100mg Gravol.	<p style="text-align: center;">Page your midwife team once you are in active labour:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1-866-530-0257</p> <p>Your team:</p>

What if my water breaks?

PAGE your midwife team day or night if you think your water has broken



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with or without contractions.