

# TIPS FOR LABORING AT HOME

- 1** **Avoid telling family & friends.**  
This keeps unnecessary stress off of you. You will labor best at this point if you're left to do your own thing. Outside of your doula and your spouse, keep early labor to yourself.
- 2** **REST!**  
While walking is a great labor tool, it's best to rest as much as possible during pre- and early labor. If it's night, try to sleep as much as possible. During the day, choose more restful activities.
- 3** **Plan distractions for yourself.**  
The best method for relieving any discomfort or nerves during pre- and early labor is distraction. Plan some activities you enjoy doing. If you enjoy scrap-booking, for example, set aside some supplies to work on during this time. It can also be a fun time to connect with your spouse and do some things you enjoy doing together, such as playing a game or cuddling while watching a favorite movie together.
- 4** **Eat and drink.**  
Drink lots of water, make regular trips to the bathroom, and eat nutritious food. Staying hydrated and maintaining energy is important during labor. Your body is getting ready to work really hard and you need the energy.
- 5** **Make sure your bags are packed.**  
If you haven't already, go ahead and pack your hospital bag. Don't forget a bag for your spouse and baby!
- 6** **Don't get disappointed.**  
Pre-labor can last days and early labor many hours. It's easy to get disappointed at how slow your labor seems to be progressing. Remember, your body is doing important work as it prepares you and your baby for birth.

## Pre-Labor & Early Labor

Pre-labor and early labor are important parts of labor where the cervix moves forward and begins to thin. You're between 0 and 6 centimeters dilated. Pre-labor contractions may be irregular or start and stop. Early labor contractions may start out 10-15 minutes apart and only lasting 30 seconds, getting closer together and longer as you progress.

Laboring at home as long as possible during this time has many benefits. You can often be more comfortable at home during early labor than you would be in the hospital or birth center. It also increases your chances of having a low-intervention birth. Plan on staying home as long as possible throughout early labor and use these tips to make it the best experience for you.

### **When do you make your way to the hospital (or birth center)?**

Talk to your health care provider about when you should make your way to the hospital as circumstance around your health, your distance from the hospital, and other factors can affect this decision. Generally, most follow the "5-1-1" or "4-1-1" rule which means you would go to the hospital when contractions have been 4 or 5 minutes apart, lasting one minute long, for one hour. If you live close to the place you'll be birthing at, you might be able to follow a "3-1-1 rule." Or, if you live a great distance or have a health concern, you might be asked to come in much sooner.

\*Ask your doctor or midwife what their policy is if your water breaks before labor contractions begin. This only happens to 10-15% of women, but it's good to note ahead of time what you should do. Remember to TACO: Note the TIME, AMOUNT (gush or trickle), COLOR (clear or greenish), and ODOR of the fluid and call your provider right away.



Sage Roots Birth Services

Laura Browning, Doula

(606) 344-9023

[laura.sageroots@gmail.com](mailto:laura.sageroots@gmail.com)

[www.sagerootsbirth.com](http://www.sagerootsbirth.com)