



AM I IN LABOUR?

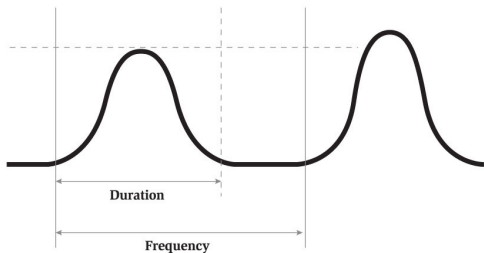
A Tip Sheet

Signs and Symptoms

- **Upset Stomach, Cramping, Back Pain.** This may also show up as vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- **Bloody show/loss of mucous plug.** This is usually light pink discharge. It can happen days or weeks before labour actually starts.
- **Nesting.** A sudden burst of energy, with an urge to get things prepared for baby.
- **Water breaking/leaking.** This may be a gush or a trickle.
- **Contractions.** A feeling of pulling or tightening in your uterus, that begin to form a rhythmic pattern. In true labour they become longer, stronger and closer together. They will not change in their pattern when you change position or take a bath (although this will ease some discomfort). **Contractions** and **cervical changes** are one of the surest ways to know that you're in labour.

When should I go to the hospital or birth centre?

- Use the (4) 5-1-1 (2) Rule to see if you should call your care provider and/or go to your preferred place to birth.
- Contractions should be **4-5 minutes apart**, with a **length of 1 minute**, and **lasting in this pattern for 1 to 2 hours**.
- If you have any concerns at all, call your care provider and/or doula for support and advice.



Early Labour Tips

It is normal (particularly for first time parents) for early labour to last for a while. Here's some tips to support you.

- Get some sleep or rest.
- Sit and rock on your birth ball.
- Relax.
- Drink tea and eat comforting foods
- Laugh and feel comfort with your partner, doula, friends or family.
- Use hands and knees/cat-cow for relief and focus.
- Distract yourself with games, walks, conversation and more