



Preparing for Labor

Labor and delivery can be a very exciting but scary time for mom. Although no pregnancy and labor are the same, here is some information to help you possibly recognize labor. These signs are for moms who have reached at least 38 weeks of pregnancy. If you have any signs of labor prior to 38 weeks of pregnancy, come to the hospital immediately.

What are some signs of labor?

You may notice any or none of the following changes:

- Nesting-a spurt of energy
- Loss of mucous plug-During pregnancy, a thick plug of mucus blocks the cervical opening to prevent bacteria from entering the uterus. When your cervix begins to thin and open, this plug may fall out. You might notice stringy mucus or a thick discharge. It's typically brown and sometimes tinged with blood. Losing the mucous plug is not a guarantee of labor. Labor may still be days or weeks away.
- Increasing back ache
- More frequent urination
- A heaviness in the pelvis, rectum or buttocks
- Abdominal tightening that becomes increasingly uncomfortable

When to go to the hospital

Come to the hospital if you experience the following symptoms:

- Contractions that are regular, every 5 minutes for one hour that you cannot walk or talk through
- When your water breaks or if you experience continual leaking in your underwear

Come to the hospital immediately if you experience the following symptoms:

- Bright red vaginal bleeding
- Severe headache
- Blurry vision or spots before your eyes
- Severe stomach pain
- Decreased fetal movement

Checking into the Hospital

Once you've arrived at the hospital, you will register in Outpatient Registration (on the first floor) and be escorted to your room in Labor and Delivery. Your family will be asked to wait in our waiting room for a short period of time while we complete your initial assessment. You will be asked to change into a hospital gown and provide a urine sample. You will be connected to a fetal monitor so that we can check on your baby's heart rate. We will draw several tubes of blood from you so we can run some laboratory tests. After you've undergone a physical

assessment (which includes checking vital signs and reviewing your medical history), an IV maybe started. You will be encouraged to ask questions.

Pain control

As your labor progresses, your pain will become more intense. There are several methods available to you for pain control, including epidural anesthesia and pain medication given through your IV line. If you need pain medication, please don't hesitate to ask for it. Only you can decide if you need pain relief. Our nurses are dedicated to helping you control your pain and will administer pain medications as often as they are allowed to do so.

During labor

While you are in labor, you can usually have clear liquids, including water, ice, apple juice, cranberry juice, grape juices, Jell-O and popsicles. Sometimes in early labor, you will be allowed to eat normally.

We will continue to monitor your baby and your contractions with the fetal monitor. We will also monitor your blood pressure and pulse at regular times. Your nurses will be communicating with your doctor throughout your labor. Your doctor can view your fetal monitor tracing from his or her computer outside the hospital.

During Delivery

As delivery approaches, your nurse will notify your doctor and prepare the room for the arrival of your baby. During delivery there will be a nurse caring for you, a nurse caring for your baby and your doctor. There may also be a third nurse present. Because of limited space in the delivery room, we limit the number of your support persons attending the delivery to three. Your support persons will be guided by the labor staff. During the delivery you can take pictures with your camera but we ask that you do not videotape during the delivery.

After Delivery

After giving birth, you'll be allowed to see your baby before the nursery nurse takes him or her to be examined, measured, and weighed. Your support persons are encouraged to go with your newborn at this time while your delivery team finishes caring for you.

Guests on Your Baby's Birthday

Sometimes women become very tired after a vaginal delivery, so it may be a good idea to limit visitors on the day of your delivery. Instead, plan on having guests come to see you and the baby later that day or the next day to give yourself the time you need to begin recovering from this experience. Rest is important for your recovery.

Recovery Time

Within a few hours of your delivery, your IV will be removed and you'll be helped out of bed so you can walk and move around. This is very important to get your circulation going and decrease your risk of blood clots. Though it will be difficult initially, standing and walking will actually help you to heal more rapidly.

Following a vaginal delivery, expect to remain in the hospital for a minimum of two days. Your vital signs will be monitored, your bleeding checked, your abdomen examined for signs of complications.

Thank you for choosing Touchette Regional Hospital for your delivery! Our nurses are here to help you recover and to bond with your baby. Please keep your nurses informed about what you need-we want your birth experience to be a positive one!