



# RECOGNIZING LABOR

## WHAT ARE TRUE LABOR CONTRACTIONS?

- Occur at regular intervals, increasing in frequency and intensity.
- The contractions are intense enough, making it hard to talk through, hard to walk through.
- Walking does not relieve your contractions.

## WHAT ARE FALSE LABOR CONTRACTIONS?

- Occur at irregular intervals, and intensity is relatively unchanged.
- Will gradually resolve with rest, hydration, or a warm bath.

## WHAT IF I NOTICE A MUCOUS-LIKE DISCHARGE?

- This is commonly referred to as your mucous plug or bloody show.
- Once you lose your mucous plug, there is no set time when labor begins. In fact, it may take 4-6 weeks to enter active labor following the loss of your mucous plug.

## HOW DO I KNOW IF MY WATER BREAKS?

- You experience a large gush of fluid.
- You experience a continuous slow leakage of fluid of water-like viscosity.
- If you are unsure whether or not your bag of water breaks, wear a pad or liner. If you constantly notice an accumulation of water-like fluid on the pad, there is a greater chance your membranes have ruptured.

## WHAT IF I AM NOT FEELING MY BABY MOVE?

- If you have been paying close attention to your baby and feel no movements, go directly to the hospital.
- If you are unsure whether or not your baby is moving appropriately, do the following:
  - ◆ Drink 1 Liter of fluid
  - ◆ Lay down on your left side
  - ◆ Concentrate on your baby's movements only and nothing else
  - ◆ If you feel less than five movements in one hour, then you should be evaluated.

## IF I AM IN LABOR, DO I NEED TO CALL MY PROVIDER BEFORE GOING TO THE HOSPITAL?

- No, once you arrive at the hospital, the Labor and Delivery Nurse will evaluate you and call your provider.
- If you are unsure whether or not you are in labor, refer to the guidelines below.

# WHEN SHOULD I GO TO THE HOSPITAL?

- Follow the 4:1:1 Pattern – If you are experiencing true labor contractions (see above) that occur approximately four minutes apart, each contractions lasts for approximately one minute, and the pattern persists for more than one hour, then you are more likely in labor and should be evaluated on Labor and Delivery.
- If your membranes rupture (your water breaks).
  - If you are feeling decreased fetal movements.
  - If you have unexplained bright red vaginal bleeding.