Title: Am I In Labor?

Author: Tim Smith

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Abstract:
Understanding the signs of labor and how to seek appropriate help is important to decrease unnecessary visits as well as decreasing delay for medical treatment.

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Primary Care Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up to date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.
AM I IN LABOR??
A Practical Guide about When to Call Your Doctor

Congratulations on nearing the end of your pregnancy. It’s an exciting time and a time filled with questions. This pamphlet will help guide you to where you can find some answers.

General Rules about Labor

A. Labor is different every time – don’t expect your labor to be the same as your friend’s, mother’s or even your last pregnancy.

B. Labor and Delivery floors of hospitals are open even when your doctor’s office is closed. You should call the labor and delivery floor with URGENT and IMPORTANT questions. Questions you don’t need answered immediately can usually be phoned to your Doctor’s office or nurse to be answered during clinic hours.

C. Talking to your Doctor during your routine prenatal visits about when to call or come in to the hospital is essential. Your Doctor can answer most of your questions early and decrease your stress or anxiety. This helps because if you come to the hospital too early they will likely send you back home, and if you come too late you could add complications for both you and your baby

ALWAYS call URGENTLY if any of the following happen to you

1. Your water breaks – it can be a small trickle that gets worse once you stand up from laying down, a constant leak or even a sudden gush of liquid between your legs.

2. You are bleeding from your vagina. Anything more than spotting is worth a phone call.

3. You notice sudden weight gain, headaches, stomach pain, vision changes and a large increase of swelling especially in your face or lower back.

4. Your Contractions are getting stronger, closer together and you are having to ‘breath through’ the pain or stop moving during the contractions.

5. You stop feeling the baby move for an extended period of time. Its normal for the baby to be less active near the end of your pregnancy – however you should still feel the baby move at least a couple times a day.

6. You are in an accident, abused or have a big fall.