

Recognizing Labor

The beginning of labor is the beginning of birth. You'll start to feel strong **contractions**. That's when the muscles of your uterus tighten up to help push your baby out during birth.

Yes, Labor Has Probably Started If:

- Your contractions are getting stronger instead of weaker. You'll probably feel them throughout your whole uterus.
- Your contractions are regular (you feel them about every 5 minutes) and they are getting more painful.
- You have pink-colored or blood-streaked fluid from your vagina.
- Your water breaks. It may be a gush or a slow trickle of clear fluid from your vagina.

No, It's Probably Not Real Labor If:

- Your contractions aren't regular or strong.
- You feel the contractions only in your lower uterus.
- Your contractions go away when you walk or change position.
- Your contractions go away after drinking fluids.



When to Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your doctor or clinic **right away** if you notice any of these signs:

- Fluid from your vagina, with or without contractions.
- Bleeding heavy enough that you need a sanitary pad.
- You don't feel your baby moving as much as before.

NOTE: Contractions are timed by both of these measures:

- **The length of each contraction** from its start to its finish.
- **How far apart the contractions are** - the time between the start of one contraction and the start of the next one.