



Comfort Measures for when you are in Early Labor  
(please see the 'What to Do When you Are In Labor' handout as well)

Early Labor	Active Labor
Contractions are usually irregular ex: every 5 to 15 mins	Contractions are regular ex: 5-10 mins apart
Contractions vary in length ex: lasting 20-90 seconds	Contractions lengthen in time and are consistent or similar to each other ex: lasting 30-60 seconds
The strength of contractions may vary from mild to medium	Intensity of contractions increases, becoming more painful so you cannot talk through them

Suggestions to make you more comfortable during the "early labor" stage:

- Take a walk. False labor contractions often stop when you change position or get up and walk
- Get some sleep or rest, especially if pre-labor is at night. Take Tylenol to help you sleep
- Listen to relaxing music or read a favorite book
- Drink water, juice, or tea. Eat a snack or small meal
- Get a massage from your partner
- Go to your favorite place in your home and slowly relax each part of your body
- Go to a movie or rent one

As your contractions get stronger, try these tips:

- Take a warm shower or tub bath
- Slow dance to your favorite music while leaning forward on your partner
- Rock in a rocking chair
- Change positions often
- Ask your partner for some positive feedback
- Rest between contractions and sleep if you can.
- During contractions, take slow, deep, easy breaths in. When you exhale, let your muscles go loose
- With each contraction, imagine your baby nuzzling in your arms
- Pray, Meditate, or try Guided Imagery (imagine yourself relaxing in your favorite vacation spot)
- Suck on a lollipop or Popsicle
- Sit on a chair and lean forward

Call Labor & Delivery (705-876-5036) for further advice if you have:

- Bright red vaginal bleeding that is like a period (normal 'show' may be red, but is like spotting)
- Continuous leaking of fluid that runs down your leg when you're not wearing a pad
- Strong contractions every 5 minutes if this is your first baby or every 10 minutes if this is not your first baby

Reviewed Sept 14/2012

References:

McKinney, E., James, S., Murray, S. (2004). Maternal-Child Nursing, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Saunders: USA.

<http://www.childbirthconnection.org/pdfs/comfort-in-labor-simkin.pdf>