

LABOR PRECAUTIONS

This is a basic list of what to look to for when you are in late pregnancy. Please call the office at (615) 778-0010 if you have questions or if you are heading to the hospital. If you cannot wait for your doctor to return your call, proceed immediately to Labor and Delivery at Williamson Medical Center. After hours you will need to enter the hospital through the Emergency Room.

Call your doctor for any of the following four:

- 1. CONTRACTIONS** - It is normal for you to have contractions off and on in late pregnancy. They may occur high in the abdomen, low, or in the back. Count from the start of one pain or tightening to the next. If the contractions are 5 minutes apart or closer together and stay that way for a least an hour, call your doctor. Also, if you have a continuous contraction that does not subside or any contractions that are too painful to wait, call your doctor.
- 2. WATER BREAKING** - Most women have their water break after they are contracting, but sometimes the water breaks without any contractions. Call us immediately if you think your water has broken, regardless of whether or not you are having contractions. Water breaking is usually an obvious gush of clear fluid. Sometimes it is discolored or just a little trickle down the leg. If in doubt, call your doctor.
- 3. BLEEDING** - You may have a small spot or streaks of blood if you lose your mucous plug or start contracting. You also may have a small spot after having your cervix checked. Any bleeding at any other time or any bleeding that is bright red or as heavy or heavier than a period should be reported to your doctor immediately.
- 4. FETAL MOVEMENTS** - Your baby may be slowing down a little as you approach labor, but the baby should still be moving. Pay attention to baby's movements every day. The baby may have an hour or two of rest but then start moving again. If the baby is moving any less than you normally perceive, then lay down and pay attention to the baby's movements for an hour. If the baby moves less than 6 times in one hour, call your doctor.

A final word about the mucous plug: You may or may not see mucous come out of your vagina in late pregnancy. Some women see mucous several times, and sometimes it is streaked with a small amount of blood. Losing the mucous plug without any of the four signs noted above does not mean you are in labor.