



















LABOUR HANDOUT

Stage	Length <i>*The bars below represent a 24-hour labour</i>	Contractions	Dilation	Emotions	Tips
1st Stage <i>Early Labour</i>	0 24  6-12+ hours (could last a day or more)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-45 seconds each • 5-30 minutes apart 	 0-4 cm	 Excited, anxious	Stay at home, rest, take a short walk, or do light activities.
1st Stage <i>Active Labour</i>	0 24  3-5 hours	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45-60 seconds each • 3-5 minutes apart 	 4-8 cm	 More serious, focused	Use different positions, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques.
1st Stage <i>Transition</i>	0 24  30 minutes-2 hours	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60-90 seconds each • 1-3 minutes apart 	 8-10 cm	 Frustrated, dependent	You may feel nauseous or shaky. Support people need to provide focus.
2nd Stage <i>Pushing & Birth</i>	0 24  20 minutes-3 hours or more	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60-90 seconds each • 3-5 minutes apart 	 10 cm	 Relieved, energized	Use different positions to push. Support people can provide encouragement.
3rd & 4th Stage <i>Placenta, Recovery, & Breast-feeding</i>	0 24  First few hours after birth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak, infrequent contractions help deliver the placenta and start the process of involution (shrinking of the uterus). • Breastfeeding within the first hour after birth supports long-term breastfeeding and milk 	The cervix closes in the days after birth.	 Happy, bonding	Hold your baby skin to skin for at least an hour right after birth.

1. When to go to hospital

It's likely that you won't need to go to the hospital until your contractions are 5 minutes apart, last 1 minute each, and continue in this pattern for 1 hour. Use 511 as a general guide—always follow your healthcare provider's instructions.

2. How do you know you are in labour

Warm-Up Contractions:

- Tighten portions of the uterus
- Don't usually cause back pressure
- Ease up over time
- Have no regular pattern
- May stop when you change your activity by resting, walking, or taking a warm bath
- Do not cause the cervix to change

True Labour Contractions:

- Eventually tighten the entire uterus
- Usually cause pressure on the lower back and/or lower belly
- Last longer over time
- Become stronger over time
- Grow closer together
- Do not stop when you change your activity, and walking may make them stronger
- Cause the cervix to thin and open