

Labor Instructions

When to call the office:

Pre-term labor: Pre-term labor occurs at less than 37 weeks. Many patients have occasional irregular contractions, also known as Braxton-Hicks that may be painful. If you have more than 5 contractions in an hour, stop all activities, drink extra fluids and stay in bed. If you continue to have more than 5 contractions in an hour, call your obstetrician.

Full-term labor: Your baby is considered mature after 37 weeks. It is normal to have bloody show and mucus during early labor and after office visits if your cervix has been checked. This is due to the cervix softening or stretching.

Call Your Doctor: When in doubt, call. The guidelines offered here are guidelines, not rules. Please call if you have any one of the following.

- When contractions are 5 minutes apart, from the start of one contraction to the start of the next, and when contractions are 45 seconds to one minute in length, and have been so for 1 to 1 1/2 hours. If you can talk through the contraction, it is probably too early to call.
- If your water breaks.
- If you have heavy bleeding.
- If your baby is not moving normally.
- If the baby is known to be other than head down (breech or transverse) and labor begins or the water breaks.
- If you are scheduled for a cesarean section and labor begins.
- If this is not your first labor and your cervix is dilated when checked in the office, call when you know you are truly in labor. It will be much faster for your second delivery.

If this is your first baby, and your pregnancy has been uncomplicated, you may want to stay home as long as possible. When labor begins, try to rest. Start timing contractions when they become very painful. You may try walking, taking a warm bath, or watching a movie to keep yourself distracted until it is time to call your doctor.

If you have had a prior vaginal delivery, your labor may be more rapid than your first experience. Call when your contractions are regular or painful. If you have had very rapid labors or are dilated prior to labor, your doctor may tell you to call at a time earlier than suggested above.

When calling the office:

During the day, you may call the office (356-0431). Press "0" for the operator. If you are calling after hours, call the exchange (554-2872). They will contact the doctor on call for Los Olivos. When the doctor calls you back, please communicate anything unusual about your pregnancy such as diabetes, history of herpes, positive beta-strep culture, high blood pressure, breech presentation or previous Cesarean section. If the doctor on call is delivering a baby or is in surgery, there may be a slight delay in returning your call. If you feel the delay is too long, please contact the exchange a second time. Call labor and delivery directly at Good Samaritan Hospital (559-2327), or go directly to labor and delivery if there is still no return call.

What should I bring to the hospital?

You may wish to bring your pillow, slippers, camera, music, nightgown or pajama, nursing bras, robe, toilet articles, baby outfit and infant car safety seat.