



# Understanding the Signs of Labor

**FPO**

## **CONGRATULATIONS, YOU MADE IT TO FULL TERM!**

If you're like a lot of pregnant moms, you're probably wondering how you'll know for sure that you're in labor.

## **RECOGNIZING LABOR**

Going into labor is the beginning of the birth process. You'll start to feel strong contractions, which mean the muscles of your uterus are tightening to help push your baby through the birth canal.

### **YES, Labor Has Probably Started if:**

- Your contractions get stronger instead of weaker—you'll probably feel them throughout your entire uterus
- Your contractions are regular (approximately every 5 minutes or less)
- Your contractions "take your breath away"
- Your water breaks, which may be a gush or a slow trickle of fluid from your vagina

### **You're Ready to be Admitted to the Hospital if:**

- Your cervix is dilated far enough that we know changes are happening (usually 4-6 centimeters)
- Testing has confirmed that your water has broken
- Your contraction pattern is confirmed on the monitor

### **NO, It's Probably Not Real Labor if:**

- Your contractions aren't regular or strong
- You only feel the contractions in your lower uterus
- Your contractions go away when you walk or change position
- Your contractions go away after drinking fluids
- You passed your mucus plug, but nothing else happens

## **WHEN TO CALL YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER**

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

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

**GBMC**