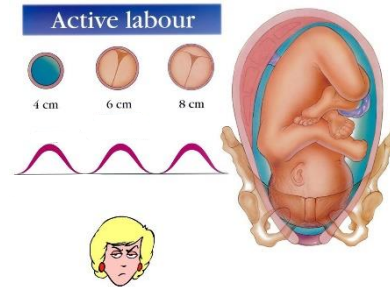


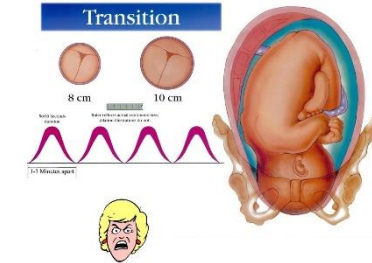
**Contractions are 3-30 minutes apart, lasting 20-40 seconds**

- This is just the beginning, it can sometimes last longer than 24 hours, try to ignore it for as long as possible. Continue with normal life until labour takes your full attention
- Eat and drink normally
- Take care of yourself, if its night-time try to sleep, a heat pack or TENs machine may help.
- Don't time every contraction, do this every few hours for 10 minutes, labour is not about the clock, its about you being with your body
- Try not to get too excited, you might want to keep phone calls to relatives' low key at this stage – then there is no time pressure or messages asking if you have had the baby yet
- Your waters may or may not break, pink and clear is normal, note the time, put a pad in and try to get some rest if its night-time (green or brown is NOT ok, CALL ASAP)
- You may have mucus discharge with small fresh blood present
- You may have diarrhoea, vomiting or need to pee a lot – this can be normal. Keep sipping at fluids to stay hydrated
- If you are not sure if you are in labour then you're not, you will know – trust your body.



**Contractions are 3-4 minutes apart lasting at least 60 seconds**

- Remember to breathe, focus on that through contractions, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Labour is about going with the flow of your body and trying not to control it, however you can work to control your breathing
- You may be withdrawn, focused, quiet and in deep concentration during contractions. Between contractions focus on relaxing, laughing, snacking, and sipping.
- You may want heat packs, massage, pressure...it will vary with each contraction.
- You may want to try a bath, shower, Swiss ball, moving around, leaning, and moving your hips, again it will vary with how you feel during the contraction. Just allow yourself to go with it.
- Don't time every contraction, do this every few hours for 10 minutes, labour is not about the clock, its about being with your body.
- If you are well, happy with movements and feeling good, trust your body about when you need to be in touch with the midwife. If this is happening at night-time, write notes on information you feel she will want to know and call her when you need her or when you feel you can't be at home anymore.



**Contractions are 2-3 minutes apart lasting at least 60 seconds until urge to push when contractions will be up to 90 seconds long with up to 5-minute breaks in between**

- This is the hardest part, the bath, shower, position changes and gas may help as well as heat and pressure on your back between your hips
- You may have a show, or your waters may break.
- Trust your body, it knows how to give birth, you are made to do this. You don't have to breathe through contractions anymore, you can push as hard as you can with them.
- As the baby moves through your muscles it hurts, A LOT, it can feel tight and burning but keep going as the baby needs your help to be born.
- A warm compress to your perineum can help, if you don't like this just say.
- After your baby is born, you body will want to birth the placenta, this can be scary because birthing a baby hurts but the placenta has no bones and feels heavy and strange – its such a relief once you birth it
- Your vagina will be checked for any tears and your rectum will be checked to make sure its intact, use the gas or breastfeed your baby at this time to help distract you.
- Welcome to the fourth trimester.....