

IT'S TIME FOR BABY!

The on-line video tour at www.vch.ca/RHBirthCentre may help you to prepare for your hospital stay.

What Is Pre-Labour?

- Contractions or cramps that do not stay regular
- Cramps do not get stronger when you move around
- Cramps are felt mostly in your abdomen
- Sometimes the cramps may slow down and even pause
- A fun video helping that may help explain pre-labour when the cervix shortens (ripens) and true labour when the cervix opens up (dilates) is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URyEZusnjBI>

What Is “True” Labour?

- Contractions open or dilate the cervix
- Contractions that get closer together
- Contractions that get stronger, longer and more painful both when you move around OR rest
- Contractions may be felt in your back, abdomen and sometimes in your thighs

What Is Early Labour?

- The cervix (the opening of the womb or uterus) starts to change to allow the birth
- Early labour could be short or last days
- This may feel uncomfortable to some and may feel very painful to others

What Do I Do When Labour Begins?

- Drink fluids (not just water) and eat lightly
- Spend time walking, “slow dancing”, changing positions and resting
- Take a warm bath or shower. This may help you to relax
- Go through the set of 4 or 5 ideas you planned to use to get through early labour. Try each different thing for 30 minutes before trying something else.

What Is Active Labour?

- The progress is more predictable and should not stop unlike pre labour which may stop temporarily
- For a first birth, the cervix will have opened to 4 cm or more and the cervix is almost paper thin
- For a second births (or more), the cervix has opened even more and thinned about 75%

Always call Birth Centre at Richmond Hospital, [604-244-5134](tel:604-244-5134) before going to the hospital.

When Should I Go To The Hospital If I Am In Labour?

- Contractions are every 3 or 4 minutes from the start of one to the start of the next
- Contractions last 40-60 seconds
- Contractions are stronger and come more often
- Contractions are hard to breath and talk through
- The contractions are this close, long and hard for at least two hours if this is your first baby OR
- The contractions are this close, long and hard for an hour if you have had a baby before

When Will I Need To Stay At The Hospital?

- You will stay when you are in **active** labour and the cervix has dilated enough. An internal check at the hospital is the only way to know how much the cervix has opened.
- When your water breaks and you are Group B Strep positive or there are other concerns such as meconium (the amniotic fluid is coloured green or yellow instead of colourless/clear).
- If you are not in active labour you may be sent home for a little while longer. Home is the best place to be if you are still in early labour.
- If needed, there is pain medication you can be given before going home.



Call the Birth Centre and Go To The Hospital Right Away If You:

- Have heavy vaginal bleeding
- Have severe constant abdominal pain
- Have leaking of fluid from the vagina that may be amniotic fluid (the water has broken)
- Sense that something is wrong

What If My Water Breaks or I Am Not Sure?

- Call the Birth Centre at 604-244-5134 even if your labour has not started. The nurses will help to determine when it is time to come to the hospital.
- Wear a pad so that we can test any wetness for amniotic fluid

What Happens After The Baby Is Born?

The goal is to keep you and the baby together as much as possible, especially for the first two feeds after the birth.

- Put your baby skin to skin as soon as possible
- Enjoy bonding and breastfeeding with your baby.
- If you are unable to have the baby directly on you skin after the birth, it may be possible for your partner or support person to do this
- Wait to invite your family and friends to visit until **you feel ready**
- Keep baby with you at all times except when medically necessary

How Often Should I Breast Feed My Baby?

Baby's stomachs are very small. Mom's breast start changing to make milk when the baby has come out. Hormones in mom and baby are triggered by breastfeeding and skin to skin contact.

Very soon after the birth, the baby should be stimulated to breastfeed:

- As soon as possible to give the baby colostrum, the antibody rich fluid which is there before the body learns to make milk
- More than eight times in 24 hours during the first few days until your body has learned to make milk and the fluid from the breast is milky. This may mean you have to wake yourself AND the baby every few hours.
- Whenever your baby wants, for as long as your baby wants
- It's normal for a baby to feed at the breast almost constantly on the second day. Interfering with this can be harmful to breastfeeding
- Avoid soothers and artificial milk from a bottle unless discussed with the doctor

The more often you breastfeed in the early days allows the body to be able to make more milk into the future.

There are common challenges and difficult days for every breastfeeding pair but this is normal. Talk to your nurses, Noakes

Clinic doctor and family doctor if you are unsure.

How Long Will I Be In Hospital?

- Usually about 24 hours after a vaginal birth
- Usually about 2 days after a C-section birth

At the earliest opportunity, it is very important to schedule a visit with the baby's family doctor within 3 to 5 days from when you are expected to go home. There is no need to wait until you have reached home before making the call. (The Noakes Clinic does not routinely see the new babies after discharge from hospital.)

What is the first baby check at the doctor's office for?

The things to be checked at that first baby visit with the family doctor are:

- baby's naked weight, compared to discharge weight and birth weight
- how much urine is the baby passing (peeing)
- is the baby passing stool (pooping) often enough
- is there any problem with the breastfeeding process for mom or baby
- does the baby have jaundice that needs testing or treatment

What Care Will I Receive When I Go Home?

- A public health nurse will phone you soon after you go home

- You are welcome to access public health services at their offices.
- Take your baby to be checked by your family doctor within a few days of leaving the hospital. (The Noakes Clinic cannot routinely see your baby for that check.)
- Call or take your baby to your family doctor or clinic to address questions and concerns about you and your baby.
- The Nurseline "811" may be helpful for general questions and health concerns but a face-to-face visit with your doctor or clinic is better.
- Call the Noakes Clinic during the first 6 weeks after delivery if you have any urgent problems such as high fever, unusual heavy bleeding, possible pelvic or breast infection.
- Plan a check for yourself at 6-8 weeks after delivery. (This can be with your family doctor or with a Noakes physician).