

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO KNOW TOWARDS THE END OF PREGNANCY

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**Kick counts:** You should start kick counts during the 28th week of your pregnancy and continue until your baby is born. Pick a time during the day when your baby is typically active. Go into a quiet room without distractions and lie on your back or sit. Put your hands on your belly and count each movement your baby makes (these are NOT just limited to kicks; you can count any movement your baby makes). You should be able to count 10 movements in one hour. If you reach 10 movements before the one hour is up, you can stop counting. If you do not reach 10 movements, get up, drink something sugary (like fruit juice) or a cold liquid and try again for one hour (start counting from 1). If your baby does not respond at this point, go to the hospital where you plan to deliver to make sure your baby is okay.

- **Important:** If you notice you have not felt your baby move at a random time during the day, we want you to follow the steps above first before going to the hospital.

**Preterm labor:** Preterm labor occurs when labor starts before 37 weeks. If preterm labor is diagnosed, we can offer medications to delay the birth of the baby. Even a few extra days can be beneficial to the baby. Call us during business hours prior to 32 weeks. After 32 weeks and after business hours, call your delivery provider. Go to the hospital where you plan to deliver if you have not reached 36 weeks and have any of these signs.

- **Call first:**
  - Change in vaginal discharge (becomes watery or bloody).
  - Increase in the amount of vaginal discharge.
  - Pelvic or lower-abdominal pressure.
  - Abdominal cramps, with or without diarrhea.
- **Go to the hospital where you plan to deliver:**
  - Regular or frequent contractions or uterine tightening, which are often painless and every 5 minutes for more than an hour.
  - Ruptured membranes (your water breaks, whether a gush or a trickle).

**Term labor:** Since you will be delivering at another facility and should have already met with the provider who will be doing your delivery, we want you to contact that provider or go to that facility if you think you might be in labor. This information is just included for your benefit.

Labor usually begins with mild or infrequent contractions. They gradually get closer together until they are less than 5 minutes apart. During this time, you can go for a walk, or try taking a shower or bath. Try to rest and relax and please try to sleep if you can. Practice relaxation exercises or meditation. As you go into “active-labor”, your contractions may become painful, often coming 3 minutes apart and lasting from 45-60 seconds. Your water may break, or you may bleed a little as your cervix begins to open. When contractions have been coming frequently for over an hour, you may be in labor.