

Warning Signs of Pre-Term Labor

Preterm labor is labor that happens before 37 completed weeks of pregnancy.

What are the warning signs of preterm labor?

Here are some signs that you may have preterm labor:

- Contractions (your belly tightens like a fist) every 10 minutes or less
- Change in vaginal discharge (leaking fluid or bleeding from your vagina)
- Pelvic pressure—the feeling that your baby is pushing down
- Low, dull backache
- Cramps that feel like your period
- Belly cramps with or without diarrhea

What should you do if you think you're having preterm labor?

Call your health care provider or go to the hospital right away if you think you're having preterm labor, or if you have any of the warning signs.

Your health care provider may tell you to:

- Come into the office or go to the hospital for a checkup.
- Stop what you're doing. Rest on your left side for 1 hour.
- Drink 2 to 3 glasses of water or juice (not coffee or soda).

If the signs get worse or don't go away after 1 hour, call your provider again or go to the hospital. If they get better, relax for the rest of the day.

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