



2955 Triverton Pike Dr  
Madison, WI 53711  
608-227-7007

## Signs & Symptoms of Labor

This list is designed to help you become aware of the various symptoms of labor you may experience. It is important to remember that not all women display the same signs of oncoming labor. If you are concerned about symptoms you are experiencing or have any questions, please call our obstetrician on call **(608) 227-7007** or the Meriter Birthing Center's triage line at **(608) 417-6228**.

**Are You Registered at Meriter?** Save yourself time by pre-registering online. Visit [www.meriter.com](http://www.meriter.com) and select *pre-registration* on the **Patients & Visitors** tab.

**How to Time Contractions** Time in minutes from the beginning of one contraction to the beginning of the next contraction.

### **Signs and Symptoms of True Labor**

- When contractions are five minutes apart or closer for over one hour.
- Time between contractions becomes shorter.
- Discomfort increases - you have difficulty walking or talking through contractions.
- Contractions are stronger when walking and do not subside when resting.
- Bloody show (discharge).
- Rectal pressure - feeling as if you need to have a bowel movement.
- Remember the "511" rule. Contractions are "5" minutes apart, lasting "1" minute long for "1" hour.

### **Signs and Symptoms of False Labor**

- Contractions are irregular (come and go) and do not get stronger.
- Contractions subside or are less frequent when resting.
- Time between contractions may remain the same or contractions become farther apart.
- No cervical change when examined by a physician or nurse.

### **Signs and Symptoms that Require IMMEDIATE Evaluation in Triage**

- Bag of water breaks. Even if contractions are NOT present, you will need to be evaluated in the hospital. A gush of fluid or a steady trickle that you can't control are both signs your water has broken. Fluid may be clear or yellow, green or pink tinged.
- Constant, severe abdominal pain.
- Bright red vaginal bleeding, like a period.
- Constant rectal pressure.
- Decreased baby movement or kicks - you count less than eight in two hours.
- Continued or severe headache.
- Blurring of vision or spots before your eyes.
- Chills/fever.
- Fainting spell or loss of consciousness.
- Severe or continued nausea and/or vomiting.



**Remember:** If you have any **questions or are unsure about whether you are in labor**, contact our clinic or the doctor on call at **(608) 227-7007** or the Meriter Birthing Center's triage line at **(608) 417-6228**.

### **What to Do When Labor Begins**

**Call Meriter Triage** - Please call the triage line at **(608) 417-6228** so they will be expecting you.

### **Your Arrival At The Hospital**

Meriter Hospital's main entrance hours have recently changed and the lobby is now open 24 hours a day. Therefore, anytime you arrive at the hospital, park in any visitor area in the ramp. (If you do not feel comfortable walking from the ramp, you can park temporarily in the drive in front of the main lobby doors. Your spouse or support person can move the car after you are admitted.) Go to the 5 North triage area where you will be admitted. If the doors to the main entrance are locked, security will let you through and you can proceed to OB triage.

### **The Meriter Birthing Center**

202 S. Park Street  
Madison, WI 53715

**Location:** 4, 5 & 6 North

**Birthing Center Triage Line:** (608) 417-6228

**Breastfeeding Helpline:** (608) 417-6547, 1-800-261-4449

**Learn More About Your Baby Every Week:** Sign up for a free, weekly e-mail newsletter for expectant and new parents - the link can be found on the *Contact* tab of our website. Be sure to join us on Facebook too! A link to our Facebook page can also be found on the *Home* page of our website: [www.msewomenshealth.com](http://www.msewomenshealth.com).