

PRETERM LABOR EDUCATION SHEET

What is preterm labor?

Preterm labor is labor which happens before the end of the thirty seventh week of your pregnancy. An early could mean that the baby is at risk for problems with breathing, eating or keeping their body temperature normal. The birth of a premature baby can affect you and your child for many years to come.

What are some of the symptoms of preterm labor?

1. Uterine contractions: Uterine contractions occur normally as pregnancy progresses. These “normal” contractions happen a few times a day and/or when you change positions. Uterine contractions that may cause preterm labor occur in a regular pattern and are more frequent. They may be painful. Any time you have more than 6 contractions in an hour, you need to notify our office
2. Low, dull backache: it may come and go or be constant and is felt below the waist.
3. Menstrual like cramps.
4. Pressure in the lower abdomen, back or thighs. This pressure may feel like heaviness in the pelvis or like the baby is pushing down or “balling up”.
5. Intestinal cramping with or without diarrhea. You may or may not have gas pains.
6. Increase or change in vaginal discharge
7. A general feeling that something is not right or you are feeling bad.

What should I do if the above symptoms continue?

1. Call your doctor.
2. Bedrest on your left side. Place a pillow under your lower back for support.
3. Drink 6 – 8 large glasses of water or fruit juice. No caffeine or carbonated drinks.