

## **When to Call the Doctor**

**Bleeding-** Heavy vaginal bleeding (any more than spotting), painful or painless, should always be reported.

**Contractions –** Having regular contractions (approximately 5 minutes apart for 1 hour) is a sign of labor. Contractions of true labor have three characteristics: they get longer, stronger and closer together. False labor goes away with activity such as walking.

Time your contractions from the beginning of one contraction to the beginning of the next. The duration is how long it lasts (usual contractions last 25-60 seconds). You may feel a tightening in the abdomen or just back pressure. Some women feel just a sensation in their upper thighs. Regardless of how you feel, check the contraction by pushing in on your abdomen with your thumb. If it is hard, even "rock-like", that is probably a contraction.

**Fluid leakage-** Call any time your membranes rupture (bag of water breaks). This may be a sudden gush or you may experience a slow leak of fluid. Amniotic fluid may be colorless or even blood-tinged. If you are in doubt, ALWAYS CALL. Do not walk around or travel in this condition.

As the cervix "ripens" and the canal flattens out (effacement), the honeycomb structure known as the "mucus plug" often dislodges. This may happen rapidly or slowly, resembling a discharge. It has a tobacco-like odor. It may be yellowish, whitish, or even blood-tinged. The loss of the mucus plug is not a true sign of labor, you do not need to call for this.

**Decreased movements of the baby-** If you are concerned about the baby moving less, have a snack and do a kick count. If you still feel the baby is moving less after the kick count, don't hesitate to call.

If you feel you are in labor or have any problems, call our office at (937) 296-0167. Anytime you have concerns, please call – it is better to call for nothing than not to call and have complications. Provide the following information: name, what number baby this is for you, and your contraction pattern. It is easier for the doctor to access your condition if you place the call rather than your partner. Also include any additional information that is pertinent to your care, such as: breech position, multiple birth, scheduled for c-section, ruptured membranes, distance from hospital, history of fast labor, other high risk information.

ALWAYS call before going to the hospital. This way we notify the hospital that you are arriving, so that they can be prepared for you. Have someone drive you to the hospital.