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When to Come to Hospital

Many people have 'practice contractions' called Braxton Hicks before their due date. When these start to form a pattern you may be entering into early labour. Early labour can last from hours to days before transitioning into active labour. Active labour is when you are having strong regular contractions and your cervix has dilated to 4cm. It can be tricky to know exactly when this happens. You will be admitted to hospital when you are in active labour.

Generally, the 5-1-1 rule can be a helpful memory aid for when to come to the hospital. If you contractions are happening every 5 minutes, last about a minute each and this has been going on for an hour... there is a good chance you are in active labour! It is important to think about how long your drive is. If you live a few hours away or if this is not your first baby, make sure to set out earlier (eg 7 or 10 min apart).

When you arrive at the hospital the nurses will check on your and baby's health and the nurse or doctor will check your cervix. If you are not yet in active labour we sometimes wait a few hours to check again. It is safer for you and baby to be at home in early labour!

Other reasons to come to the hospital include not feeling normal fetal movements, a gush of fluid, bleeding from the vagina, feeling unwell, high blood pressure or any other concerns. We are always happy to see you if you are worried!

Please see this website from the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (SOGC) for more info



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