

[M]OTHERBOARD RESOURCES

SIGNS OF LABOR



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You are getting closer to meeting your baby!

This can be an exciting, confusing, and sometimes frustrating time.

Here are some signs that labor could be right around the corner.

SOFT SIGNS

YOUR BABY HAS “DROPPED,” AKA “LIGHTENING”

You might feel like there’s more room to breathe and more room in your stomach. Also, you may feel like there’s a bowling ball between your legs and you have to pee even more frequently.

LOSING SOME OF YOUR MUCUS PLUG

Your cervix, the door between your vagina and uterus, is sealed by a layer of mucus to prevent bacteria from reaching your baby. As your cervix starts to get ready for labor, softening and opening, that mucus layer can fall out. And yes, it looks an awful lot like white, pinkish, or brownish snot. Sometimes this can happen after a cervical exam or sex and might **not** be a sign you’re headed for labor.

NESTING AND GETTING THINGS READY FOR BABY

Some people have a burst of energy before they go into labor, wanting to organize and clean the house, get ready for baby, or do a bunch of shopping.

RESTLESSNESS AND IRRITABILITY

You may feel very emotionally “raw” before going into labor as your hormones start to shift. You may ask, “Well, what else is new?!” but these feelings can get more intense when you’re about to meet your baby.

NAUSEA AND DIARRHEA

You may have an upset stomach or diarrhea as your body flushes and clears poop out of the way in preparation for birth.

CERVIX STARTS TO SOFTEN AND OPEN

Sometimes the cervix “ripens” before birth, softening, opening, and moving from the back more towards the front of your body. This doesn’t happen with everyone though, so don’t get discouraged.

Remember, cervixes are not crystal balls. You can be high, firm, and closed and have your baby the next day, or walk around at 5 cm dilated (open) for weeks!

Don’t worry about having your cervix checked before you’re in labor unless you need to make some sort of decision (like whether or not to induce labor). It likely won’t tell you when you’ll have your baby and can cause unwanted stress and anxiety.

CRAMPING AND LOW BACK DISCOMFORT

Sometimes persistent, menstrual-like cramps and back discomfort can mean that more active labor is on the way.



HARD SIGNS

WATER BREAKS

Sometimes labor begins with your waters breaking, though it's much less common than it is in the movies. It can either be a gush or a slow trickle depending on where the tear in the bag occurred.

Remember to note the acronym C.O.A.T.:

- Color
- Odor
- Amount
- Time

STRONG, REGULAR CONTRACTIONS / WAVES

If your contractions are coming regularly (every 4-5 minutes) and aren't going away if you drink lots of water or change your position (getting up, lying down), you could be meeting your baby soon. Strong contractions/surges are difficult to talk through and you may need to be upright and moving around to stay more comfortable.

BLOODY SHOW

Bright red bloody show combined with strong contractions can indicate that you're making good cervical change (meaning your cervix is thinning out and dilating).

LABOR LOG:



SIGNS OF LABOR

CHEAT-SHEET

“SOFT” SIGNS

- Baby drops
- Lose your mucus plug
- Nesting
- Restlessness, irritability
- Nausea and diarrhea
- Cervix starts to soften/open
- Cramping and lower back discomfort

“HARD” SIGNS

- Water Breaks
- Strong, regular contractions / waves
- Bloody show

People to contact when in labor:



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