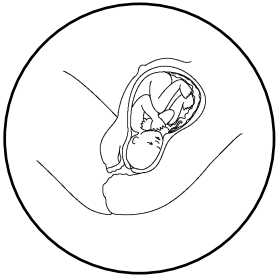
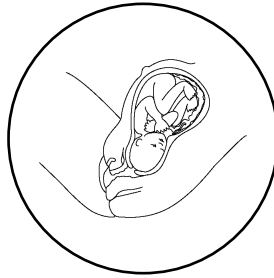


# Coping with Labor

## What happens to my body in labor and birth



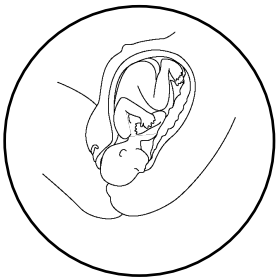
**Early Labor** (5 to 24 hours)  
Rest, eat, drink lightly.  
Breathe slowly through  
contractions and relax.  
**Cervix opens 0 to 4  
centimeters**



**Active Labor** (3 to 6 hours)  
Change your position.  
This may be taking a shower,  
sitting in a chair or rocking  
on your hands and knees.  
**Cervix opens 4 to 8  
centimeters**



**Transition** (10 to 60 minutes)  
This is a very intense part of  
labor but does not last very  
long. You may need extra  
support during this part of  
labor. **Cervix opens 8 to 10  
centimeters**



**Pushing and Birth**  
(5 minutes to 3 hours) Push in  
a comfortable position. Blow  
or pant when your baby's  
head is crowning. This helps to  
prevent tears to your vagina  
**Your baby moves out of your  
uterus, through your vagina  
and out of your body**

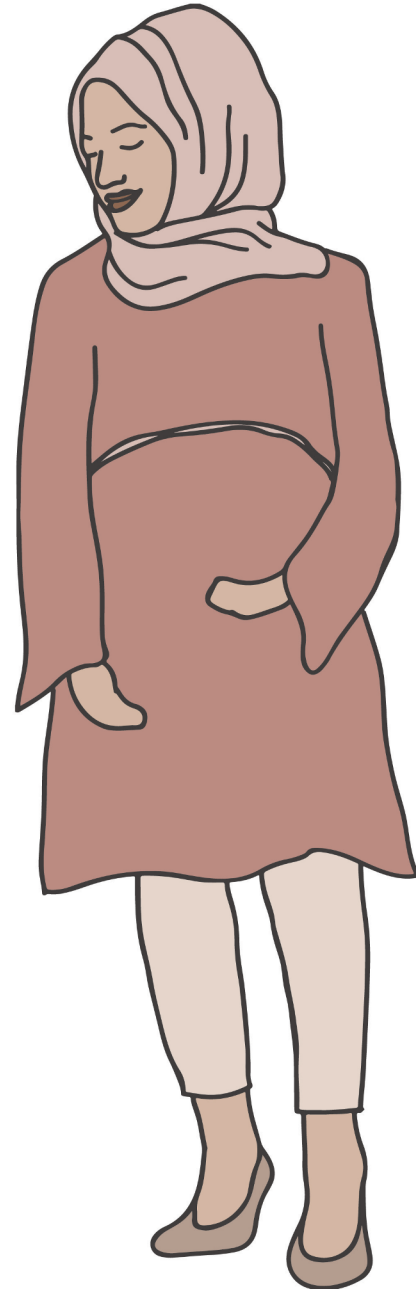


**Birth of the Placenta**  
(5 to 30 minutes) Contractions  
feel very mild. Your vagina may  
be sore. You may feel shaky  
and cold. **Your placenta  
moves out of your uterus,  
through your vagina and out  
of your body.**

## What are the signs of labor?

You may have some of these signs before you go into labor:

- A small amount of light pink or brownish mucus from your vagina
- Your baby moves down into your pelvis. You may feel less pressure on your stomach and more pressure on your bladder.
- Diarrhea
- Cramps or mild contractions. These feel like when you get your period.
- Lower back pain
- Your bag of water may break. You might have a gush or a trickle of fluid from your vagina (You can be in labor without breaking your water.)



## When do I call my provider?

**Call your clinic during office hours.  
After office hours, call 617.414.2000 or  
the number your provider gives you if:**

- Your bag of water breaks. Call even if you do not have contractions.
- You have regular, painful contractions: 4-5 minutes for an hour if it's your first baby, and 5-8 minutes for an hour if it's not your first baby. Call if you aren't sure about the timing.
- You have bleeding from your vagina
- Your baby is not moving as much as before



# What you can do in early labor to help cope with the labor and delivery process



Stay in bed at night and rest



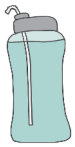
Listen to relaxing music or birth meditations



Talk to friends



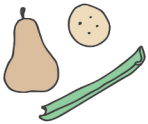
Stay busy! Keep yourself distracted as long as you can.



Drink plenty of water



Walk around if you can



Eat meals and snacks



Apply warm or cold packs where it hurts



Try a warm bath, shower, or use a hot water bottle



Change your position



Ask for a massage



Try aromatherapy



Ask for help from your partner, Birth Sister, or other support person



Stay home as long as you can



Focus on deep breathing



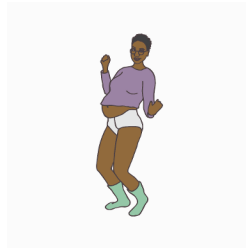
Call your provider to get advice

# Tips for relieving your pain

## Natural Relief



Get in the tub, bath, or shower



Move, walk, dance, change position



Sit on a birth ball

### Also try these tips

- Use hot pack or cold packs
- Self-hypnosis
- Do deep and focused breathing
- Get a massage

## Environment



Play music you like



Aromatherapy



Get warm or cool down

### Also try these tips

- Distraction with TV or a movie
- Turn down the lights
- Keep voices quiet

## Medicines at the hospital



IV medicine



Laughing gas



Epidural

## Emotional



Get help from your labor support



Call your birth sister or Doula