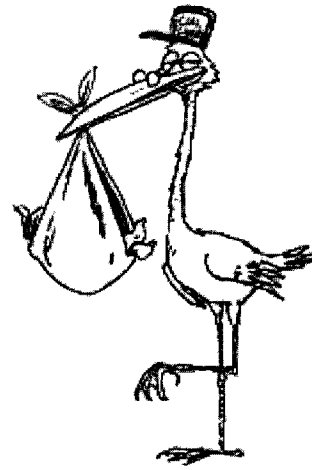


What do I do when....



...my water breaks?

Your water may break (membranes rupture) at any time. This could be just a trickle or may be a large gush. It is common for patients to sometimes be uncertain about the membranes leaking or possibly leaking small amounts of urine. Amniotic fluid may be colorless, yellow or blood-tinged. There is no way for you to determine the difference between your amniotic fluid and urine. Because of this you need to be evaluated. **Do not** walk around or travel in this condition. **Do not** wait for contractions to start before being evaluated.

...I am having contractions?

Start timing your contractions from the beginning of one contraction to the beginning of the next. This is referred to as the interval. The duration is how long the contraction actually lasts. (This is usually 25 to 60 seconds.) With a contraction you may feel tightening in the abdomen or you may only feel pressure in the lower back. You may press your thumb into your abdomen during one of these tightenings to check. If the abdomen is firm or "rock-like", it is probably a contraction. Once you have been having contractions for 1 to 2 hours **and** they are lasting 45 to 60 seconds **and** occurring every 4 to 5 minutes, **it is then time to be checked.** Contractions of true labor after 36 weeks have three characteristics; they get stronger, longer and closer together. False labor usually goes away with walking.

...I have "bloody show", loose my mucus plug or start bleeding?

Please do not call to let us know when your mucus plug is passed. After 36 weeks this is not a significant observation. The mucus plug is just that. It may be clear/yellow or may have some blood in it. Some people have reported a tobacco odor to it. This can be gradual or it could come out all at once. The loss of your mucus plug **is not** a sign of true labor. It is not uncommon for you to have some light bleeding after a vaginal exam. Your provider may even tell you after the exam to expect this. As long as this is light we do not need to evaluate you. If, however the bleeding is heavy and you are soaking a pad an hour, you do need to be evaluated! It is also common to experience some light bleeding after sex near the end of pregnancy. Should this occur, rest and the bleeding will generally resolve. If there is ever any question about bleeding, or you have been told that you have a placenta previa, you need to be evaluated.

...one of these conditions has happened?

If you have experienced one of the conditions discussed above and need to be evaluated, keep this in mind, **during office hours only please** call us at 452- 3300. If it is after office hours, weekends or holidays, **do not call the answering service.** Instead, call North Kansas City Hospital Labor and Delivery at **691-1799** and ask for the charge nurse. Explain to her what is happening to you and that you are coming in to be checked. She will then obtain your information and notify admitting that you are on your way to the hospital. You will enter the hospital at the admitting entrance on the north end of the hospital next to the Emergency Room. From there you will be taken by wheelchair to labor and delivery on the seventh floor. Once evaluated, your nurse will then call our doctor on call. This may be your regular physician or it may be one of his or her partners. The nurse and the doctor will then discuss your particular findings and make a decision how to best manage your care.

By following these guidelines you will help us to provide you with the best care available in a timely manner.



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