

Learn the Signs of Preterm Labor

For more information, contact the March of Dimes, www.marchofdimes.com/oregon or call 503-222-9434.

Preterm labor is a serious problem occurring before 37 weeks of pregnancy. This is too early, and your baby could be born too soon. Even if you do everything right, you can still have preterm labor. Call your health care provider right away if you have any of these warning signs.

Warning Signs of Preterm Labor

- Contractions (your abdomen tightens like a fist) every 10 minutes or more often.
- Change in vaginal discharge (leaking fluid or bleeding from your vagina).
- Pelvic pressure — the feeling that your baby is pushing down.
- Low, dull backache.
- Cramps that feel like your period.
- Abdominal cramps with or without diarrhea.

What your health care provider might tell you

- Come into the office or go to the hospital right away.
- Stop what you're doing.
- Rest on your left side for one hour.
- Drink two to three glasses of water or juice (not coffee or soda).

If the symptoms continue after one hour, call your health care provider back. If symptoms get better, relax for the rest of the day and don't do the things that caused the symptoms before.

Take care of yourself and your baby

- Get regular prenatal checkups.
- Try to avoid stress. Ask family and friends for help.
- Don't drink alcohol, smoke or take street drugs.
- If you feel burning or pain when you go to the bathroom, you may have an infection. Call your health care provider.

