

# Preterm Labor

Know the signs of preterm labor to take care yourself and your baby.

Preterm or premature labor is when you go into labor 3 or more weeks before your due date. This may be too soon for your baby to be born, and babies born early may have health problems. There is no way to know who will have preterm labor, so everyone should know the signs of preterm labor and be ready to take action.

## Signs of Preterm Labor

- ◆ Bleeding from your vagina
- ◆ Clear, pink or brownish fluid leaking from your vagina
- ◆ Contractions or a hardening of your uterus every 10 minutes or more often—it may feel painless
- ◆ Pressure or the feeling that your baby is pushing down
- ◆ Cramps, with or without diarrhea
- ◆ Cramps that feel like your period
- ◆ Low, dull backache

Even if you have only one sign of preterm labor, you should Take Action!

## What to Do if You Have Preterm Labor

Call your health care provider or go to the hospital right away if you have one or more of the signs of preterm labor. Your provider may tell you to:

- ◆ Lie down on your left side for about one hour,
- ◆ Drink 2 to 3 glasses of water or juice, and
- ◆ Feel your abdomen for contractions.

If the symptoms get worse or do not go away after one hour, call your health care provider again or go to the hospital. If the symptoms go away, relax for the rest of the day. If they return, call your healthcare provider again or go to the hospital.

**If you have any of the signs of preterm labor, call your healthcare provider!**

Know the signs of preterm labor to take care yourself and your baby.



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