

TRUE LABOR

True labor means your body is actively preparing to give birth. It involves real, progressive contractions that cause changes in your cervix.

SIGNS OF TRUE LABOR:

- **Contractions:** Regular, rhythmic, and get stronger, longer, and closer together over time (e.g., every 5 minutes).
- **Pain Location:** Usually starts in the lower back and moves to the front abdomen.
- **Intensity:** Pain increases with time and does not go away with rest or hydration.
- **Cervical Changes:** The cervix dilates (opens) and effaces (thins out).
- **Other Signs:** Possible rupture of membranes ("water breaking").

TRUE VS. FALSE LABOR

FALSE LABOR

False labor, or Braxton Hicks contractions, are irregular and do not cause cervical changes. They're often called "practice contractions."

SIGNS OF FALSE LABOR:

- **Contractions:** Irregular and unpredictable, no consistent pattern.
- **Pain Location:** Usually felt in the front of the abdomen.
- **Intensity:** Mild and do not increase over time.
- **Effect of Activity:** Often lessen or stop with rest, walking, or changing position.
- **No Cervical Changes:** The cervix remains the same.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

- Contractions are regular, strong, and increasing in intensity.
- Your water breaks or you notice a gush of fluid.
- You experience bleeding or unusual discharge.
- You have severe pain or other concerning symptoms.

