

# Learning About When to Call Your Doctor During Pregnancy (After 20 Weeks)

## Your Care Instructions

It's common to have concerns about what might be a problem during pregnancy. Although most pregnant women don't have any serious problems, it's important to know when to call your doctor if you have certain symptoms or signs of labor.

These are general suggestions. Your doctor may give you some more information about when to call.

## When to call your doctor (after 20 weeks)

**Call** anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You have severe vaginal bleeding.
- You have sudden, severe pain in your belly.
- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have a seizure.
- You see or feel the umbilical cord.
- You think you are about to deliver your baby and can't make it safely to the hospital.

**Call your doctor now** or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have vaginal bleeding.
- You have belly pain.
- You have a fever.
- You have symptoms of preeclampsia, such as:
  - Sudden swelling of your face, hands, or feet.
  - New vision problems (such as dimness, blurring, or seeing spots).
  - A severe headache.
- You have a sudden release of fluid from your vagina. (You think your water broke.)
- You think that you may be in labor. This means that you've had at least 6 contractions in an hour.
- You notice that your baby has stopped moving or is moving much less than normal.
- You have symptoms of a urinary tract infection. These may include:
  - Pain or burning when you urinate.
  - A frequent need to urinate without being able to pass much urine.
  - Pain in the flank, which is just below the rib cage and above the waist on either side of the back.
  - Blood in your urine.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You have vaginal discharge that smells bad.
- You have skin changes, such as:
  - A rash.
  - Itching.
  - Yellow color to your skin.
- You have other concerns about your pregnancy.

## If you have labor signs at 37 weeks or more

If you have signs of labor at 37 weeks or more, your doctor may tell you to call when your labor becomes more active. Symptoms of active labor include:

- Contractions that are regular.
- Contractions that are less than 5 minutes apart.
- Contractions that are hard to talk through.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

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