



Comfort in Early Labour

Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre

Maternity

Congratulations!

The long awaited event of your labour and baby's birth is finally here. We believe the best place for you and your family to be in your early stages of labour is in the comfort of your own home.



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The following information suggests ways for you to stay comfortable during this time. It also provides guidelines that will help you decide when it is time to return to the hospital.

We encourage you to relax and enjoy this special time preparing for your baby's birth.

Comfort measures in early labour

Rest and Activity

Continue with light activity as long as you are comfortable. Walking often relieves discomfort, while at the same time, it promotes labour. Balance activity with rest. Try to sleep or nap if possible but otherwise rest and relax.

Food and Drink

Eat light, easily digested meals. You may find smaller, more frequent snacks are easier on your stomach. Drink plenty of fluids. Try to drink at least one glass of fluid such as water every hour. Do not drink products that contain caffeine or ginseng. Do not drink alcohol.

Pain Relief

As your contractions get stronger, begin to use your breathing and relaxation exercises. Try different positions to find what works best for you. Various positions are helpful at different times (sitting, standing, walking, lying on your side, hands and knees). A 'hands and knees' position works well to ease pain or pressure on the low back. You can also try massage, warm baths, warm showers, and hot or cold packs.

Do not take any pain medicines during this time unless your doctor has said you can.

When to call for help

Call if you notice any of the following:

- Your water breaks, especially when the water is any colour other than clear (such as green or brown).
- You suddenly have a fever and feel hot or shivery after being sent home from the hospital with broken waters.
- You have any amount of bright red bleeding from your vagina.
- You have constant tightness or pain in the belly (abdomen) that does not go away.
- This is your first baby and your contractions are coming every 3 to 4 minutes, and lasting for 45 to 60 seconds each time, and continuing for 1 to 2 hours.
- This is not your first baby and your contractions are coming every 5 minutes, and lasting for 45 to 60 seconds each time, and continuing for 1 hour.
- Your labour pains (contractions) are not eased or relieved by any comfort measures.

Call if you have any concerns about your labour.

Who to call

You can call:

- Your doctor or midwife
- The Maternity Unit at Abbotsford Regional Hospital
604-851-4700 Ext. 646351 or 640375

Maternity
Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre
32900 Marshall Road
Abbotsford, BC, V2S 0C2
604 851 4700 Ext. 646351/640375

Adapted with permission from BC Women's Hospital 'Comfort in Early Labour' (1994).

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This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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