

Home Care Instructions For Women At Risk For Preterm Labor

Your doctor and/or midwife has determined that you are able to be sent home from the hospital. Please talk with your doctor or midwife about how to care for yourself and your baby. Basic instructions are listed below.

Call your doctor or midwife or the hospital immediately if:

- Your bag of water breaks.
- Your baby stops moving.
- You have more than _____ contractions in one hour.
- You have any bleeding from your vagina.
- You have a low, dull backache. The pain may be felt in your lower back, or move to your sides or front.
- You have a fever higher than 100.4°.

The hospital number to call is _____

Activity

Many women have more contractions when they are active. To keep this from happening, you may need to limit your activity. Your doctor or midwife has chosen the following activity level for you:

<u> </u> Limited Activities	Most of the time you should lie down on your side. You may be up during the day for short periods of time (less than 30 minutes). No heavy work or lifting is permitted. Someone else needs to do the laundry and cleaning.
<u> </u> Extended Activities	You may be up during the day but you must lie down at least once in the morning and once in the afternoon for about two hours. No laundry, cleaning, heavy work, gardening or lifting is permitted. You may need to be off of work outside the home.
<u> </u> No Activity Restrictions	You may resume your normal activities. If you begin to have contractions, you should stop what you are doing immediately and lie down on your side. Drink 2-3 glasses of water or juice and monitor your contractions. If you still have contractions, call your doctor or midwife or the hospital.

Home Care Instructions (continued)

- **Baby Movements and Contractions** Lie on left side for one hour. Place your hands near your belly button. Count the times your baby moves or kicks. If the baby does not move at least ____ times in ____ hour(s), call your doctor or midwife.

At the same time, feel your belly for tightening. Remember, contractions do not have to hurt. If you have _____ contractions or more in one hour, call your doctor or midwife.
- **Sexual Relations** Do not have any sex until your doctor or midwife says it is okay. Having sex or orgasm may cause uterine contractions.
- **Diet** You still need to eat well for your and your baby's health. Pick foods that are high in iron, calcium, and fiber, such as red meat, cheese, bran muffins. Do not skip meals. Small meals and snacks may be easier for you to tolerate.
- **Fluids** Women, who get dehydrated, sometimes have more uterine contractions. Drink six to eight 8-ounce glasses of fluid a day. Water, non-fat or 1% milk and fruit juice are good choices. If you have diabetes, do not drink juice.
- **Stool Softeners** Constipation (hard stools) is a common problem. The stool softener is to prevent constipation. If you get constipated, drink lots of water and eat foods with fiber. You can also call your doctor or midwife for help with constipation.
- **Other**

WARNING SIGNS OF PRETERM LABOR

All pregnant women have contractions now and then. Preterm labor is when you have contractions along with the opening of your cervix before the 37th week of pregnancy. Warning signs that you might be having preterm labor are:

1. More than ____ contractions per hour. Not all contractions hurt. Tightening or “balling up” in your belly may be contractions.
2. Menstrual-like cramps.
3. Back pain – lower back, may also go to sides or front, and may start suddenly.
4. Pelvic pressure – fullness or pressure in pelvic area, back or thighs.
5. Intestinal cramps – with or without diarrhea, “gas pains,” “flu” may lead to dehydration and increased contractions.
6. Increase or change in vaginal discharge – change in consistency (sticky, watery) or color.
7. General feeling that “something is not right.”

If you have any of these symptoms or are unsure, call your doctor, midwife or the hospital.