



Signs of prelabor

Prelabor is the period just before labor begins. Call your health care provider if any of these signs of prelabor happen more than one month before your due date.



- The baby begins to settle into your pelvis. It looks and feels as if the baby has “dropped.” This process is called lightening and engagement. It’s easier for you to breathe after it happens.
- You feel more pressure on the pelvis and rectum (rear end). The pressure can cause a dull ache in the pelvic area or lower back. It feels like menstrual cramps.
- Vaginal discharge may increase and thicken.
- Your energy level changes. Some women feel less energy. Others feel more. They want to clean the whole house. The “nesting instinct” is a way of getting ready for the new baby.
- You lose the mucus plug. That’s a blob of thick stuff that blocks the cervix. You can lose it several days before labor starts. Or you can lose it just as labor starts.
- You may see the bloody show. When the cervix opens, small blood vessels often break. The blood colors the mucus plug pink. Or it may streak the mucus plug with red. When the mucus plug falls out, you may see the blood. You may pass a big clump that looks like a wet cotton ball. Some women don’t notice the bloody show. Bloody show usually means that labor will start within 24 hours. But sometimes labor could still be a few days away.
- You have diarrhea. Some women get this just before labor starts.
- The “bag of waters” (or your “water”) breaks. That’s the sac inside the uterus. It holds the amniotic fluid. The baby grows there. About 15 percent of the time, the water breaks before labor starts. More often, this happens during labor. The fluid can come out in a gush or a slow trickle. Call your provider right away if this happens.