

These tips will help clarify when to call me and what to do in the meantime.

The easiest thing you can do to lessen your odds of unnecessary interventions is to labor at home for as long as possible. "As long as possible" is different for everyone. Some women tend to deliver very quickly, or will need antibiotics before giving birth. You don't want to go until things are moving along nicely; then there is less potential for interruption of labor.

If you think you are in early labor, call me.

You're not necessarily calling me to come support you, but I will be able to provide you with ideas and suggestions over the phone. It also gives me a heads up that I might be joining you soon, so I can better plan my day.



11 PM- 6AM, please call me only if you are ready for me to join you, if you are feeling scared, or if you feel that something is urgent.

When I go to bed at night while on call I am packed and ready to leave the house. I do not need any "heads up" time to prepare.

A well rested Doula helps assure that you get the best possible support when you really need it.

You do not need to contact your OB until you are on your way to the hospital, unless they have specified otherwise. If you call them, you will probably be advised to go into the hospital long before you really need to. This is usually a liability based recommendation. If you go into the hospital too early, there is opportunity for more potential interventions. Always follow your intuition, and if you are concerned, certainly go to the hospital, but you have hired a doula for advice and support, and this is a great time to take advantage of that.

Rest! If you believe you are in early labor, do your best to [rest](#). If it's the middle of the day, take a nap. If it's evening, eat dinner, take a warm bath or shower and turn in for the night. If you are awakened during the night, try to slow your labor by drinking a large glass of water and getting into a warm shower for about 40 minutes, and then try to sleep between contractions. You will be amazed how much you can labor in your sleep... and if it's truly labor, it's not going to "stop" because you went to bed. If you can fall asleep, even just between contractions, it will help immensely.

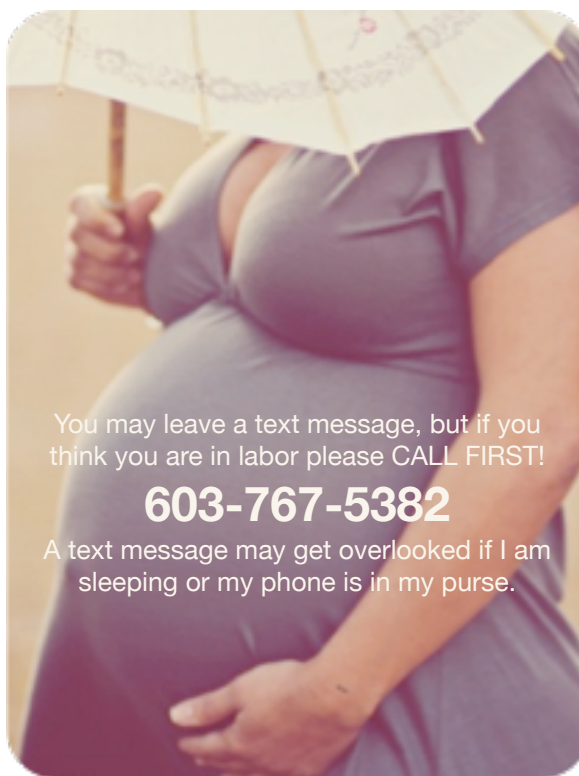
Call me first thing in the morning (after 6 AM) to let me know how you are coping with early labor.

It is exhaustion, not pain that is the real obstacle in labor. Pain, hunger, irritation with people or circumstance - all seem much more intense when you are exhausted. You will get tired by the end of labor, you can count on that - reserve your energy.

Ignore contractions as long as you can. First time parents have the hardest time with this because of the anticipation and excitement that goes along with labor starting. By ignoring labor and keeping yourself well distracted and rested, you will be much better prepared for the active phase of labor.

There will eventually be a "shift" in labor where ignoring it will not be an option. Then you can begin your "work" and start moving and coping and riding the waves of your birth. Once you can no longer ignore your contractions, you are encouraged to cope with labor using whatever techniques you have prepared to use.

I will come support you whenever you feel you need help, regardless of where you 'think' you are in your labor. Your emotional state is more important to me than the frequency of your contractions.



You may leave a text message, but if you think you are in labor please CALL FIRST!

603-767-5382

A text message may get overlooked if I am sleeping or my phone is in my purse.

When to Call Your Doula

During early labor, care gently for yourself and your partner. Take long baths or showers, spend time kissing, cuddling and making love (yes, you can make love during labor if your water has not broken, and it actually helps move things along). Listen to favorite music, prepare a favorite meal to share together, or scribble out a last minute list of names.

Listen to your body to find comfort while you rest. If lying down is uncomfortable try sitting on a birth ball or in a rocking chair; moving rhythmically. Prop yourself up with a mountain of pillows or kneel on the couch with your head resting over the back.

You will feel each contraction coming before it's really there - this is the time to take your first deep cleansing breath. Face the contraction straight on and stay on top of it as it builds to a peak. Ride the wave rather than

letting it crash over you. This first deep breath helps you do this. From there, focus on relaxation. From your head down, release any tension in the forehead, jaw, tongue, shoulders and down the spine. Always from top to bottom (because we want baby to move down, not up). If you have a partner, they can be scanning your body for areas of tension and gently bringing your awareness to that place so you can consciously release it. The idea is for each area of your body to be loose and not taking energy and productivity away from the job your uterus and cervix are doing. Allow the tension to be there - not in your face/back/hips. A relaxed face, loose hips and a breathing mama tells me that she is allowing herself to open up to the process of birth.

GO TIME!

If you are having any of these symptoms you should be on your way to your birth location.

Shaking - Uncontrollable trembling or shivering without feeling cold is normal during labor, and also a sign that things are really moving forward.

Nausea - You may begin to feel nauseous and even begin to vomit or burp a lot.

"I can't do this anymore" - Feeling frantic and overwhelmed is a clear sign that you are nearing transition.

Pressure - You will feel more and more rectal and vaginal pressure as your baby moves further and further down. You may be convinced that you have to poop (and sometimes, you do), however, it's often the baby who is making you feel that way. This is a good indication that you are moving towards transition.

Involuntary "pushes" - the "urge to push" can be compared to throwing up. When we vomit, there is no stopping it - it's coming and your stomach is involuntarily retching it up and out. Essentially, this happens with the urge to push as well. Your abdomen will heave and you may begin to grunt and push along with it.

