

Pregnancy and birth



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Information leaflet for professionals



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Positions and movement

- Upright position and moving during childbirth can relieve pain and help baby to move lower in the birth canal.
- You should move listening to your own feelings and try to find the best position for you. You can for example walk, sway, wiggle your hips, dance or squat.

Approaching childbirth

Is this normal?

Vaginal bleeding

- Bloody discharge is normal when the amount is less than regular menstrual flow and there is also mucus in the discharge.
- Minor bloody discharge is usually related to opening of the cervix.
- Vaginal bleeding is abnormal when the discharge is heavy and bright red.
- Heavy bleeding can be a sign of danger, such as placental abruption.

Baby's movements

- Baby's movements in the womb are a sign of the wellbeing of the baby. Healthy baby moves 4-100 times per hour all the way to the beginning of the labour.
- In the last trimester movements are more systematic, which means they are more powerful, but they come less frequent.
- Decreased baby's movements can be a sign of hypoxia, but also baby sleeping, mother using sedatives or smoking.

Amniotic fluid

- Normal amniotic fluid should be clear, light yellow or light pink and has no smell.
- Abnormal amniotic fluid is green or clearly bloody. Green amniotic fluid can be a sign of baby's hypoxia.
- If the water breaks when the baby is in breech position or there is more than one baby in the womb, situation can be dangerous.
- Water breaking increases the risk for infection.

Contraction pain

- Normal labour pain will ease between the contractions.
- Continuous abdominal pain is abnormal and can be a sign danger, such as uterine rupture.

Checking baby's wellbeing by counting movements

- Baby's movements in the womb are a sign of the wellbeing of the baby. Healthy baby moves 4-100 times per hour. The expecting mother can usually feel baby's movements around halfway of the pregnancy and should feel movements until giving birth.
- In the last trimester movements are more systematic, which means they are more powerful, but they come less frequent.
- Decreased baby's movements can be a sign of hypoxia, but also baby sleeping, mother using sedatives or smoking.
- Count the baby's movements only if you are worried about baby's wellbeing.

How to count baby's movements:

1. Lie on your left side.
2. Count all the movements you feel for one hour. If you get more than 10 movements, you can stop counting. Everything is ok with the baby.
3. If you get less than 10 movements, count again for one hour. You should move around and drink something before you count the movements again.
4. If you still get under 10 movements, go to the hospital for a check-up.

Signs of labour

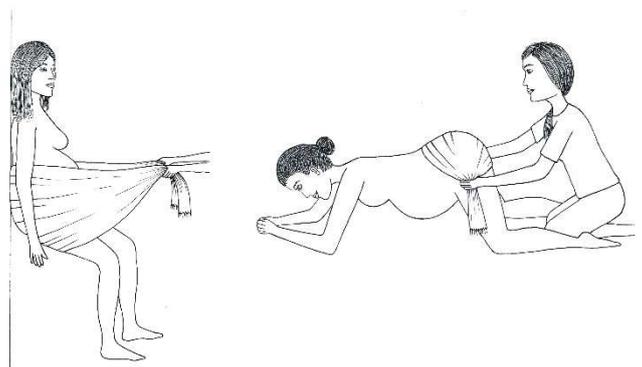
- Onset of labour varies in every pregnancy. Contractions can begin little by little or they can be intensive from the beginning. Water can break either before or during the contractions. This usually intensifies the contractions. Normal amniotic fluid should be clear, light yellow or light pink.
- Regular contractions that last over two hours are usually a sign of ongoing labour. Contractions are regular, when they come at least once in every 10 minutes.

- When contractions begin, woman should start to keep track on the duration, frequency and intensity of the contractions.
- Regular contractions may cause mucosal and bloody discharge and pressure in the perineal area, which can increase the probability of ongoing labour.

Self-help pain relief in childbirth

Rebozo

- Rebozo is a cloth that can be used during pregnancy and childbirth to relax and relieve pain.
- The support person can give a massage by wrapping the cloth around the woman and making small rhythmic movements or slow, relaxed movements.



Massage

- Massage and touch relieve pain and helps relax.
- Massage in the lower back, shoulders and hands are commonly used to relieve pain during labour.

