

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU GO INTO LABOR

1. Call me as soon as you think you are in labor. Together we will decide if it is time for us to come or not. \*Note: It is ok for Dad to call but I will want to talk to Mom too.
2. It's a good idea to take a shower. You will want to be fresh and clean for the birth, and it is also relaxing!
3. If your water breaks you can put on a sanitary pad. However, it needs to be changed frequently. Do not put anything into your vagina.
4. Put a pan of [distilled] water (3 – 4 quarts) covered with a lid on to boil – boil gently for 30 minutes. **Leave lid in place**, turn off the stove and allow the pan to cool. This sterilized water will be used for warm compresses during the birth and for cleaning you and the baby afterwards as needed.
5. Straighten the birth room, but don't stir up dust by cleaning. Remove any items which block pathways. There will be several people moving around in the room. Clear an area on a table or dresser for the midwife's supplies and equipment.
6. Put one set of sheets on your bed with a plastic sheet or cover over them, then the other set of your clean fitted sheets on top. You can do this a head of time if you like.
7. Prepare the two containers you have set aside for trash and laundry. Place one trash bag into each container.
8. Have someone clean the bathroom. Make sure the counter around the sink is clear, as we will be scrubbing our hands and cleaning up after the birth (including checking the placenta) here. All tooth brushes and hair brushes should be put up and away from this area so they don't get splashed.
9. **PLEASE EAT**, especially if you are in early labor. Nutrition and hydration play a major role in the success of childbirth! Eat something high in protein for endurance and something high in carbohydrates for energy. Drink at least 8 ounces of fluid per hour.
10. Keep your bladder empty. Urinate every hour except when you are asleep.
11. If you have not had a bowel movement recently, or simply feel like you want an enema, early-active labor is the time to do it. It may be uncomfortable if you wait until labor is more advanced. You do **NOT** have to do an enema! Only rarely will stool in the lower rectum interfere with birth. However, *if you are planning a waterbirth* it is a very good idea to use two fleet enemas to clean out the lower colon and rectum since anything there will get pushed out into the water in which you will be sitting, which is not healthy for either you or for the baby. You should wait until I get to your home if you want an enema since occasionally they will speed up labor.
12. *Continue your normal activities* until the midwife gets there. It's a good idea to have a labor day 'project' planned to keep your mind busy. **If it's the middle of the night, try to sleep.** If it's in the middle of the day, stay as active as you feel comfortable being without becoming fatigued. Remember: drink plenty of fluids!

**"Just as a woman's heart knows how and when to pump, her lungs to inhale, and her hand to pull back from fire, so she knows when and how to give birth."** ~Virginia Di Orio

