It can be difficult to pinpoint exactly when “true” labor begins, but it is likely that labor is underway when your contractions become increasingly longer, stronger and closer together. Labor contractions don’t stop or ease up no matter what you do. You will be most comfortable (believe it or not) laboring at home. Distraction is helpful. Try walking, taking a shower or bath, or resting until it is time to call your physician. We try not to admit you to the labor floor until you are in active labor; we may send you home or walking around the hospital if you arrive in early labor.

When should I call?
- If you are having frequent, painful contractions. Most women need to be contracting at least every 3 to 5 minutes with contractions lasting 60 seconds for several hours before they are ready for admission to the hospital. Time your contractions from the beginning of one to the beginning of the next.
- Your baby is not moving normally. Use your “fetal kick counts” sheet as a guide
- Your baby is known to be breech
- You are scheduled for a cesarean section and labor has begun
- If this is not your first pregnancy and your cervix is dilated, call when you know you are in labor. Second (and beyond) babies generally come much faster than the first.

It’s probably too early to call if:
- You can talk or sleep through your contractions
- Changing positions or walking makes your contractions subside

Call immediately if:

**YOU ARE PRETERM OR HIGH-RISK**
Your physician will let you know if you have a complicated or high-risk pregnancy. Call regardless if you are less than 37 weeks

**YOUR WATER BREAKS**
You will need evaluation regardless of your Group B strep status. Please let us know if your fluid is green-tinged as this is a sign of meconium

**YOU HAVE HEAVY BLEEDING**
Light spotting and pink-tinged discharge (“bloody show”) is normal in the labor process

**YOU HAVE A SEVERE HEADACHE, VISUAL CHANGES, OR UPPER ABDOMINAL PAIN**
These can be signs of preeclampsia and you may need immediate evaluation

Every pregnancy is different and no list can cover all situations. If you are concerned, call us.

Obstetrics, Gynecology & Menopause Physicians, P.C.

NEW HAVEN OFFICE 203.789.2011
GUILFORD OFFICE 203.453.4450
ESSEX OFFICE 860.767.0223
SHELTON OFFICE 203.242.0524