

# When to Call my Doula

The goal is for me to arrive just at the time that you enter active labor, or when you are working pretty hard, but can easily manage conversation between contractions. For most women the first 3 cm come slowly and fairly painlessly. Once your body starts demanding your attention for contractions, you will need me there to help you. These guidelines should help us coordinate so that I will be there for you at just the right time! If you are unsure about any of these stages, please err on the side of calling me!

## Timing Contractions:

Frequency – time from start of one contraction to the start of another

Duration – time from the start of the contraction to the end of the contraction

## Labor Cheat Sheet:

1-2 CM - Contractions 5 or more minutes apart, mom is in good spirits

Try: waking, eating, drinking, baking, packing, resting, cleaning, anything to distract yourself. Call your birth team and time contractions.

3-5 CM - Contractions 4 minutes apart, 1 minute long having been that way for an hour (4-1-1), mom is focusing through contractions but able to converse outside of them

Try: relaxation, breathing, massage, shower, hypnosis, etc. I would like to join you at some point during this stage. We can communicate about the timing.

5-8 CM - Contractions consistently 3-4 minutes apart and at least one minute long, mom is serious and focused

8-10 CM - Contractions 2-3 minutes apart, mom is serious, focused and may be doubting her ability to finish.

**Call me as soon as you think you are in labor** so that I can get childcare arranged. If it is between the hours of 12am-5am, please call when you have noticed a regular pattern of contractions (every 5-7 minutes) and they are **growing in intensity**, or if you feel like you need help. Remember to drink plenty of fluids, eat light healthy meals, go to the bathroom at least once an hour, sleep if you can, move around and stay on your feet if it is daytime, and try not to focus too much on the contractions. Your chances for natural birth increase if you can avoid focusing on the contractions when they are easy.

**Call me when your contractions are becoming stronger so that you can't ignore them, but you can still talk through them**, regardless of the time of day.

**Call me if you feel like you need me.**

**If the contractions are too painful to ignore, please call me right away**, regardless of the time of day.

Don't wait to call me until you are leaving for the hospital unless labor is progressing very quickly and you feel you don't have time to wait. I would love to be at your home with you and labor there together so that we can find the perfect time for you to arrive at the hospital.