

Stages of Labor:

Braxton Hicks (non painful contractions) can be present for weeks prior to delivery.

Once the labor process starts, it is usually expected to be completed within 20 hours, with a dilation rate of 1cm per 2 hours. Slower for first time moms.

3 stages: Labor, Delivery and Afterbirth

Stage of Labor (and average length of time)	Key Characteristics	Contraction Length	Contraction Spacing	Cervical Dilation and comments on effacement	Suggested "interventions" or activities
Braxton Hicks	Non Painful contractions that can be present for weeks before delivery	1-2 min	erratic		
Prelabor (Early Labor)	The regular contractions MUST be accompanied by ONE of the following: bloody mucus discharge (bloody show), spontaneous rupture of membranes or complete cervical effacement.	REGULAR contractions up to 15 seconds	10-30 minutes apart	Dilation to 3cm	Relaxing in a tub, going for a walk, visiting friends, watching a movie, preparing meals for post-delivery, doing a project; playing games -forward leaning positions
Stage 1 Active Labor (usually 5 hours for 1st baby, a bit shorter)	Progression of 1cm of dilation per hour, for at least 2 hours places you in this	Up to 45 seconds	5-10 minutes apart	Dilation between 3 cm and 8 cm	-warm bath -forward leaning positions as in prelabor

<p>for subsequent babies)</p>	<p>phase. And in general, progression of 1cm every 2 hours is expected to avoid intervention. Progression from 4cm to full dilation should take no longer than 12 hours.</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -supported squatting -to rotate baby, knee to chest position and quadruped (hands-knees) with pelvic rocking -TENS use, BURST MODE, from T10-T12, down to L4
<p>Stage 1 Transition: Up to 2 hours, may be longer with epidural due to reduced maternal sensation to push</p>	<p>-Cervix moves anteriorly and retracts around baby's head, to allow for descent into vaginal canal -many women feel a spontaneous urge to push at 10cm, some earlier (but don't push until 10 to save energy)</p>	<p>Up to 90 seconds</p>	<p>1-2 minutes</p>	<p>Dilation from 8-10 cm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -heat and counterpressure over lumbar (low back) and sacral (lowest back) area. -firm pressure through femurs -TENS -massage -breathing -avoid forced pushing here
<p>Stage 2: Delivery: Usually within 2 hours for first time moms</p>	<p>-continue to hydrate and eat here.</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -lean forward while sitting -kneeling -supported squat -dangle position with legs over side of bend -pelvic press against ilium

Stage 3: Afterbirth	-Placenta, amniotic sac and umbilical cord are expelled within one hour of delivery of baby -Baby suckling or nipple stimulation may trigger uterine contractions -if this doesn't happen completely, there is a risk for hemorrhage				
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