

PATIENT INFORMATION

Latent Phase of Labour

Maternity Services

**You have been given this information leaflet following
your assessment for labour on the Maternity
Assessment Unit.**

Your labour is not yet established and you have been advised to return home. Here is some useful information to help you during the latent phase of labour.

WHAT IS THE LATENT PHASE OF LABOUR?

When you are having your first baby, your cervix has to transform from a long, firm tube, which on examination can be felt behind baby's head, to being flat and soft, gradually opening up for the baby to be born. In order for this to happen, there needs to be regular contractions, and lots of them!

Often the discomfort starts off in your back and you can feel period type aches and pains which increase in strength and turn into contractions. These contractions can stop and start, varying in frequency, strength and length. You may get a good run of regular ones and then just when you think you are getting somewhere, they can reduce or stop completely.

As well as the contractions, you may also experience blood stained mucus in your underwear or upon wiping after going to the toilet – this will be your show which is normal.

HOW LONG DOES THE LATENT PHASE OF LABOUR LAST?

This is different for every woman. For some, this is a short time and others it can go on for days. The aim is to get to established labour which is when your cervix is dilated at least 4cm, is soft and stretchy and you are having strong, regular contractions.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

We would encourage you to:

Perform normal activities, go for a walk.

Distractions through listening to music, watching television/DVD.

Keep well hydrated, drink plenty of fluids such as non-fizzy isotonic drinks and water.

Try to eat small regular snacks such as toast, biscuits or a banana in order to maintain energy levels.

Focus on breathing techniques and relaxation.

Massage.

Trying different positions, using a birthing ball or keeping upright and mobile can really help, but in between having some rest. Do have a lay down if you can or have a long soak in a warm bath. Hot water bottles can also really help, especially with the period type aches and pains.

TENS machine when they become uncomfortable.

Trying to sleep, rest/nap.

Monitor fetal movements.

You can also take paracetamol as per the recommended dose of at least 4 hours in between tablets with no more than 4g in 24 hours.

WHEN DO I NEED TO CONTACT A MIDWIFE?

It is recommended that you do stay at home for as much of this stage as you can. This way you will be more relaxed and there is lots of research to show that you are more likely to go into labour more quickly. Staying at home in a known environment will encourage production of oxytocin (the hormone produced in labour) as well as endorphins (your own natural pain relief).

If you are experiencing regular contractions or if your waters break, then this is a good sign that it is time to ring the maternity unit, especially if your waters are not clear but blood stained or green.

Additionally, if you have any concerns about your baby's movements, are having any bleeding vaginally which is not mucousy, constant pain which is not coming and going or you have any concerns at all **then contact triage** for advice on:

Triage 01695 656604

During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have questions or concerns.

MATRON

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have (contact number – Delivery Suite Co-ordinator 01695 656919).

INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION

- Your own GP

OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) – 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) – 0800 328 6297

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need
this leaflet in an alternative format**

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust

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Wigan Road, Ormskirk, L39 2AZ
Tel: (01695) 577111

Southport & Formby District General Hospital
Town Lane, Kew, Southport, PR8 6PN
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FOR APPOINTMENTS

Telephone (01695) 656680
Email soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net

Please remember to complete the **attached Friends and Family Test**.

Alternatively, you can complete the *Friends and Family Test* on-line by going to:
southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT

Thank you

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