



# For Your Information

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*Important information for Christiana Care patients*

## **Premature Labor - Warning Signs**

Premature labor, also called preterm labor, is labor that starts before 37 weeks of pregnancy, or more than 3 weeks before your due date. Premature labor can often be stopped if you identify it early. Symptoms of premature labor include:

- **Uterine Contractions**

If you feel your uterus tightening or the baby balling up four times or more in one hour.

- **Menstrual-like Cramps**

Cramps like those you may have during your period. They may come and go or be constant.

- **Abdominal Cramps**

These feel like stomach cramps with or without diarrhea.

- **Low Backache**

This is a backache near your tailbone that comes and goes or is there constantly.

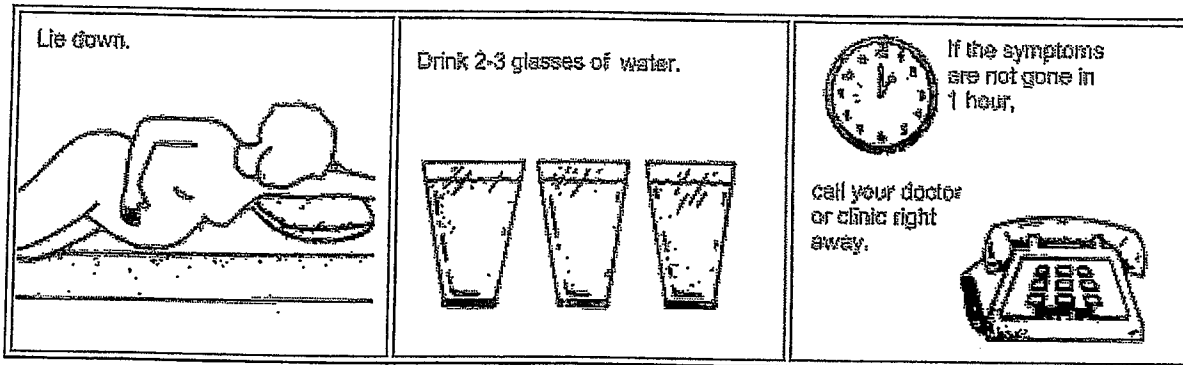
- **Pelvic Pressure**

This feels like the baby is pushing down in your vagina.

- **Change in Vaginal Discharge**

There may be a sudden increase in your discharge, or it may become more mucousy, watery or slightly bloody.

**IF YOU HAVE ONE OR MORE OF THESE SIGNS,  
YOU COULD BE IN PREMATURE LABOR AND SHOULD:**



**Why is it important to prevent premature labor?**

Premature labor is related to 70% of infant deaths due to low birthweight. A low birthweight is 5 lbs., 8 oz. or less.

**What are some causes of premature labor?**

Experts do not really know the actual causes. Some things that may put women at risk include:

- previous premature labor or delivery of a premature baby
- twin or triplet pregnancy
- medical problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney or lung disease
- abnormality of the uterus or cervix
- abnormality of the placenta
- women under 17 years
- DES exposure

**CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR CLINIC RIGHT AWAY IF YOU NOTICE:**

- any bleeding from the vagina that is more than a light day of your menstrual period
- a sudden gush of fluid