

Birth Preparedness Checklist

As you move toward your due date, being prepared will help you feel more relaxed and confident about becoming parents. Remember that your “due date” begins 2 weeks before your EDD, so it’s important to be ready and 2nd babies often come a little early!

36 WEEKS (4 WEEKS BEFORE EDD)

- Pelvic rocks two or three times a day for 15 to 20 minutes each time to help prevent back labor
- Take short naps, if you have the opportunity
- Listen to your relaxation CD at least once a day
- Call or email your doula after each of your doctor’s appointments
- Increase your water intake (**you should already be drinking 1 oz. of water for each two pounds of your body weight per day**) Fruits and vegetables are great sources of water -- the most waterlogged fruits and vegetables are watermelon, oranges, apples, cucumbers, iceberg lettuce, and tomatoes. Eating these will help with fluid retention and swelling, too! **Dehydration can cause pre-term labor.**

37 WEEKS (3 WEEKS BEFORE EDD)

- Bags packed (see What to Pack handout for details)
- Alternative route to hospital prepared in case of traffic problems
- Prepare two food baskets or bags (one each for the labor and postpartum nurses)
- Car seat installed properly

38 WEEKS (2 WEEKS BEFORE EDD)

- Evening Primrose Oil (EPO) capsules for perineal massage and vaginal suppository WITH caregiver's approval*
- Working phone card (cell phones sometimes don’t get reception in hospitals or your battery may die)

LEAVING FOR THE HOSPITAL -- EAT BEFORE YOU LEAVE

- Bags packed (separate bags for labor and postpartum)
- Ice chest, juice and snacks (yogurt, bananas, soup, fruit, etc.) for mom and partner
- Insurance card and copy of pre-admission paperwork
- Phone list and contraction timer filled out for hospital staff
- Two or more pillows with colorful pillowcases (not your favorite pillows or pillowcases)
- Towel and large sheet of plastic or trash bag in car (in case of release of membranes)
- Nurses’ baskets or bags
- Chargers and multi-outlet surge protector for phones and electronic equipment.

* **Evening Primrose Oil (EPO)** contains essential fatty acids that our bodies use to make the same prostaglandins their body would typically make as labor gets near. Our typical American diet is often deficient in these fatty acids, so EPO is suggested as a dietary supplement, not as a medicinal substance or treatment. Some midwives recommend 1000 mg three times a day orally; others recommend taking 500-1,000 mg orally per day. There is currently some question as to whether or not orally ingested EPO has a positive effect on softening your cervix. Some women insert a punctured capsule vaginally, during their last bathroom visit in the night (usually between 3:00 and 5:00 a.m.) beginning 10 to 14 days prior to due date and continuing until baby comes. I encourage you to do your own research.



Doula Contact Information - When to Call Your Doula

IN THE DAYTIME — 7:00 A.M. - 11:00 P.M.

After 37 weeks, call or email (tracy@bestdoulas.com) after each prenatal appointment to update me on your physical and emotional state. If you have an internal exam please let me know how far dilated you are, how effaced, and the station of the baby's head. Call or email me any time you have questions or concerns. REMEMBER - 2nd babies can come FAST!

If you are in labor or think you might be in labor, if you lose your mucus plug or have bloody show, call me right away. Please call me if your bag of waters releases even if you are not having contractions or if you're having contractions that require your full attention and you're unable to talk through them!

IN THE NIGHT — 11:00 P.M. - 7:00 A.M.

If you're able to handle the contractions easily, try to slow your labor by drinking a large glass of water and getting into a warm bath for about 30-40 minutes, then try to sleep between contractions. If you can fall asleep, even between contractions, that is the best thing to do! It will be your last opportunity to sleep for a long, long time. Please only call in the middle of the night when you are ready for me to come, if you are feeling scared, or if you feel that something is urgent! I don't want you sitting at home worried about something and feeling like you can't call.

When I get a call in the middle of the night, I fully wake up to take your call and get ready to leave. I have found that it is often impossible to fall back to sleep. When I go to bed at night, I am fully prepared to go to a birth so that I can leave right away. There is no need to give me a 'heads up' call me to let me know that you are in labor, unless you are ready for me to come and be with you. This way, I can be fully rested and energized to work with you for what may be a very long time. A well-rested doula helps assure that you get better support at your most crucial time of need!

CALL FIRST	Leave a brief message , wait 5 minutes	(818) 448-0817	cell phone
CALL SECOND	Leave a brief message , wait 5 minutes	(877) 436-8528	cell phone
CALL LAST	If no response at the above numbers	Call backups listed on your keytags	

WHEN I WILL JOIN YOU

I rarely join 2nd time moms at home. I'll join you when your labor begins to get intense and you feel you need some help. Usually this is when the contractions are about 4-5 minutes apart, a minute long, and very strong. Although I won't check you, most women are about 2-3 cm dilated at that point. Your emotional state is more important to me than the frequency of the contractions. I will come when you feel you really need help.

If your labor is being induced, I may stay with you until you are settled in and then go home or to my van until active labor contractions begin -- remember, if your labor is induced, it may be 12 to 24 hours before you have contractions that are strong enough to require labor support.