

Phase of Labour	What You Might Feel	What You Can Do	What to Remember
<p>Stage 1: Effacement & Dilation</p> <p>A. <u>Latent Phase</u> 0-4 cm. Contractions: 30-60 seconds, 5 minutes or more apart <i>(from start to start)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Increased vaginal discharge ☞ Diarrhea or constipation ☞ Light cramping or tightening ☞ "Show" ☞ Ruptured membranes <i>(this may happen at any time right up to the baby's birth)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Light foods and tea <i>(or juices or broth)</i> ☞ Time a few contractions ☞ Call midwife ☞ Slow, relaxed breathing ☞ Relaxation exercises ☞ Bath or shower ☞ Urinate frequently ☞ Rest!! <i>(Or take a nice walk outside.)</i> ☞ Take some picture, get things ready. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Many women feel energetic, excited, impatient, talkative.... ☞ SAVE YOUR ENERGY! ☞ If it is night time, try to fall back to sleep for awhile. ☞ Hot water trickled over abdomen usually feels good during Phase 1.
<p>B. <u>Early Phase</u> 4-8 cm. Contractions: 45-60 seconds, 3-5 minutes apart</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Stronger, more frequent contractions ☞ More serious concentration ☞ Pre-occupied ☞ Dependent on companionship ☞ Restlessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Continue concentrated breathing <i>(lighten up if necessary)</i> ☞ Effleurage <i>(cornstarch)</i> ☞ Teas, juices, water for thirst ☞ Broth, yogurt, toast, etc for hunger ☞ Release all body parts ☞ Vary position <i>(sitting, standing, etc.)</i> ☞ Pillows to support all body parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Concentrate on 1 contraction at a time. A back-rub or thigh massage might feel great. ☞ You can continue taking a walk ☞ Continue to relax ☞ 'Hands & Knees' for back-labour may help
<p>C. <u>Late Phase</u> 8-10 cm. Contractions: 60-90 seconds, 2-3 minutes apart <i>(or back to back)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Total involvement and detachment ☞ Apprehension ☞ Increased pressure ☞ Heavy "Show" ☞ Desire to push ☞ Some women feel: shakey, leg cramps, hot, perspiration, cold, nausea, vomiting 	<p>Breathing – light, using partner for eye contact and rhythm. Feel your spouse's touch and love. Wake up in time for contraction. Stay in present time. Make sure room is tranquil and full of confident support and caring. Change positions if necessary. Thigh massage between contractions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ These contractions may be no stronger than previous ones – only longer perhaps <i>(some may have double peaks)</i>. The people around you are there to help & support you. ☞ Support people should reassure her, gently & lovingly: "Stay with it", "You're terrific", "Open ...", "You can do it", "Your baby is coming soon!" ☞ If she asks for medication, she needs more support.
<p>Stage 2: Birth of Baby <i>(10 minutes - 3+hours)</i> Contractions: 45-90 seconds, 2-5 minutes apart</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Contractions may slow down and change character ☞ Urge to push ☞ Pressure to rectum and perineum ☞ Total involvement ☞ Stretching <i>(burning)</i> sensation ☞ Feel head moving down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Relax perineal muscle ☞ Physical support to woman ☞ Push gently – let body rhythms determine length and intensity ☞ Push with vagina <i>(loosen mouth!)</i> ☞ Be ready to stop pushing when head crowns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Get mirror <i>(and eyeglasses!)</i> ready. ☞ Hot compresses and vitamin E oil feel great & help on perineum. Squatting encourages rotation of baby's head (posterior) and increases pelvic diameter. ☞ Reach down and touch your baby's head.
<p>Stage 3: Expulsion of Placenta</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Contraction <i>(Some women are so involved with the baby, they don't feel it!)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Love your baby! ☞ Gently push with contraction 	<p>Your placenta has helped to give life to your baby. You might want to take a close look at it.</p>

- ☞ Remember: Waves come to shore, noisy trucks do finally pass by, and the view from the mountain you've climbed somehow is more breathtaking, exhilarating and majestic!
- ☞ Remember: VBAC labours rarely need any medical interventions *(and, in fact, interventions often affect the outcome)*.