



PRENATAL HANDOUT

This handout briefly explains the stages of labor, possible pain relief options, and what may be offered during an induction. For more information, contact your Roots 4 Change doula.

STAGES OF LABOR

Early labor

This may last a few hours or a few days. You may feel mild contractions or have some bloody discharge. Rest and relax. Go for a walk. Pack final items of the birth bag. Eat regularly. Stay hydrated. Having sex before the water breaks could be helpful; orgasms and semen help to soften the cervix and cause contractions.

Active labor

Your contractions may occur every 5 minutes and get longer, stronger, and closer together. You may need to breathe and focus. You may feel nausea or feel your water release. Change positions. Eat and drink, Empty your bladder. Work with your doula and support team. Move your breath & your body. Vocalize.

Second Stage

You may feel more pressure in your bottom or feel like you need to have a bowel movement. Contraction patterns may slow down. Use your breath and your core to bring your baby down. Rest in between contractions. Eat and drink. Empty your bladder. Change positions.

Third Stage

You may feel some cramping or see some bleeding that helps you and your provider know your placenta is ready to be delivered. Be skin to skin with your baby. Offer your breast to your baby or do gentle nipple stimulation. Your provider may push on your stomach to limit the amount of bleeding after the placental delivery. Ask for a placenta tour if you wish to see the organ that you made!

PAIN RELIEF

. water, heat, massage, movement, music, birth ball, peanut ball, and affirmations can help.

. narcotics in your arm can help take the edge off of contractions for a few hours. These drugs cannot be given if your baby is close to being born as they can affect the baby's breathing.

. nitrous oxide is self-administered and can help take the edge off of contractions as you need. There is no evidence of side effects to the baby or mother/birth parent.

. an epidural will cause numbness from the waist down & can offer pain relief for the rest of your labor. You will need to remain in bed and can use various strategies to push such as the squat bar, sheet pull, & one leg up.

INDUCTIONS & CESAREAN SECTIONS

Your labor may need to be induced or you may need to have a c-section for various reasons. Your Roots 4 Change doula has a handout with more information regarding inductions and c-sections.