



False Labor

Learn to Read Your Body's Signals

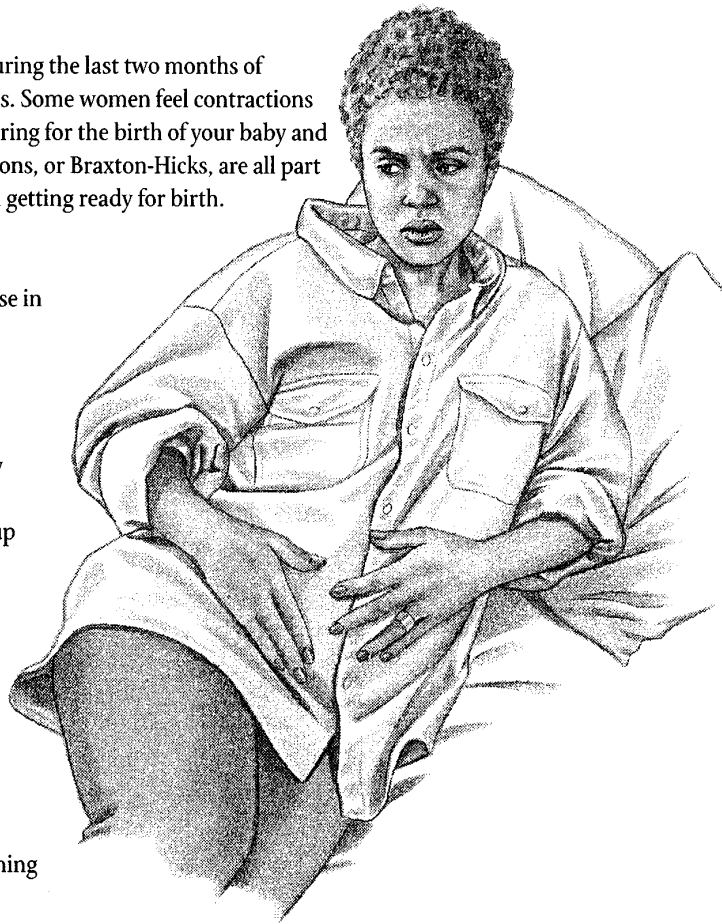
“False labor” is really not false at all. Often, during the last two months of pregnancy, you may experience contractions. Some women feel contractions all through their last trimester. Your body is preparing for the birth of your baby and the uterus needs practice. The “practice” contractions, or Braxton-Hicks, are all part of the process your body naturally goes through in getting ready for birth.

How It Feels

- Braxton-Hicks contractions usually don't increase in strength or length.
- They're usually irregular, perhaps beginning at 15-minute intervals, then five, then 30.
- If you walk around or change positions, the contractions don't increase in intensity and may stop altogether.
- Braxton-Hicks contractions are most often felt up high and in front.

True Labor

- The contractions in an active labor feel almost rhythmic, following a regular pattern.
- They continue to get stronger, longer and closer together.
- Walking or changing positions makes the contractions stronger.
- You'll usually feel true labor contractions beginning in the back and moving forward.



When to Call Your Doctor

✓ **if your water breaks; if the fluid is not clear, but green or brownish, tell your doctor.**

✓ **if you have a fever**

✓ **if you experience bleeding**

Is It Too Soon?

Every pregnancy is different. Only about 5 percent of babies are born on their due dates. A baby is considered full-term if it's born anytime after 37 weeks. Before 37 weeks, the fetus's lungs may not be fully developed. If you're experiencing regular contractions before 37 weeks, call your doctor as a precaution.

If your water has broken, it's important that you don't place anything inside the vagina. Your mucus plug, also called bloody show, may dislodge a few days before labor begins.