



FIRST TRIMESTER

How to tell the difference between Braxton Hicks and real contractions

Not sure if it's the real deal or just practice? This guide breaks down the key differences between Braxton Hicks and labor contractions, so you can feel prepared and informed.

A free guide from maternity.app

Braxton Hicks contractions can feel confusing, especially as your due date gets closer. Here's how to spot the difference between these 'practice' contractions and the real thing.

Know the basics of Braxton Hicks

- **Timing.** They're irregular and don't follow a pattern.
- **Intensity.** They're usually mild and don't get stronger over time.
- **Location.** They're often felt only in the front of your belly.
- **Relief.** Changing positions or drinking water can make them go away.

Spot the signs of real labor contractions

- ☐ They come at regular intervals.
- ☐ They get progressively stronger over time.
- ☐ They last longer (around 30-70 seconds).
- ☐ They start in your back and wrap around to the front.
- ☐ Changing positions or drinking water doesn't stop them.

When to call your provider

If you're unsure whether it's Braxton Hicks or real labor, call your provider. They'll ask about your symptoms and help guide you. Never hesitate to reach out, especially if your contractions are less than 5 minutes apart, increasing in intensity, or accompanied by other labor signs like your water breaking.

TRACK YOUR CONTRACTIONS

Use a contraction timer app or pen and paper to log the frequency, duration, and intensity of your contractions. This can help you and your provider determine if it's real labor.

When in doubt, trust your instincts. You know your body best, and every labor journey starts with just one contraction at a time.