



FIRST TRIMESTER

How to Time Contractions: The 5-1-1 Rule

Wondering how to identify true labor? The 5-1-1 rule simplifies the process of tracking contractions so you know when to head to the hospital. Follow this guide to navigate your way through labor with confidence.

A free guide from maternity.app

Understanding the difference between Braxton-Hicks and true labor can be tricky. The 5-1-1 rule is here to help you recognize when it's time to go to the hospital or birth center.

Use the 5-1-1 rule to track contractions.

- **Frequency.** Measure the time from the start of one contraction to the next. True labor contractions typically occur every 5 minutes or less.
- **Duration.** Each contraction should last for at least 1 minute (60 seconds).
- **Consistency.** This pattern must be maintained for a full hour to indicate active labor.

The 5-1-1 Tracking Checklist.

- ☐ Time the frequency (every 5 minutes).
- ☐ Time the duration (at least 1 minute).
- ☐ Track the consistency (for 1 hour).
- ☐ Log physical changes (do contractions change with movement?).
- ☐ Avoid unnecessary early trips to the hospital.

Know when to call your doctor.

- **Water Breaks.** If your water breaks, head to the hospital right away, especially if the fluid is green or brown.
- **Vaginal Bleeding.** Any bright red bleeding warrants immediate medical attention.
- **Fetal Movement.** A sudden drop in fetal movement should prompt a call to your provider.

STANDOUT ADVICE

Don't hesitate to trust your instincts. If something feels off, reach out to your healthcare provider.

Embrace the journey.

Timing contractions can help you feel more in control as you approach labor. Trust your abilities and listen to your body.