

## *Early labor ideas*

It's all about the oxytocin!

Oxytocin is the hormone that causes the uterine contractions of labor! Our bodies also release it when we cuddle, laugh, make love, share a meal with loved ones, or enjoy the company of our friends.

**Think: Warm, cozy, safe, private. Mood lighting. Date night. Pleasure. Movement. Fun with your partner, friends, family!**

*Early labor is a time to do things that give you **pleasure**! The more you enjoy yourself now, the more oxytocin your body will produce to help move labor along. It's also really helpful to change your activity or position every couple of hours (unless you're sleeping.) Sleep when you can!*

- REST: If you are sleepy, sleep!
- EAT & DRINK: If you are hungry, eat! Avoid foods you'd rather not see again (vomiting is common in labor). This is a good time for your favorite comfort foods. Fuel up! Hydrate thoroughly.
- DON'T TIME YOUR CONTRACTIONS: when they are frequent enough to need to know their spacing, you'll know it.
- EXPERIMENT with what works for you during contractions. See if there is a rhythmic activity that you like to repeat with each contraction. See if there is an affirmation or image that helps you. See what kind of external focus gives you the most comfort.
- MOVE: Go for a WALK. Do hip opening movements: Gentle lunges, squats, hula or belly dance type hip swaying and circling, and movement that makes your hips uneven are great! Have a DANCE party.
- Make SOUNDS. Roar, moo, and groan. Get comfortable making these sounds. They help a lot as labor becomes more intense.
- Goof around! Be SILLY together! Laugh! Watch a funny movie (change positions a few times).
- CONNECT with your partner or family members. Hug! Slow dance. Make eye contact.
- Take a BATH or shower together.
- Cuddle and kiss. GET FRISKY (as long as your waters haven't broken, intercourse is generally OK unless your medical team has said otherwise).
- DOUBLE CHECK that you have what you want to bring to the hospital ready, so you can relax into laboring at home until it's time to go and can focus on getting ready to meet your baby soon!
- NEST. Nap! Snuggle. Organize. Bake.
- PLAY: a board game, Twenty Questions, etc.
- If there's something on your mind, find a chance to SAY IT (You can always say it to me if you're not sure who else can hear it). Stuck thoughts can make labor sticky. Help yourself to have a smooth labor by getting it out.
- CALL me. I can give you phone support during this time and will leave to join you when your contractions are 7 or less minutes apart and you are ready for my presence.

**(203) 233-9114**

***If your waters release or you have medical concerns, call your midwife or OB.***

