



## Early Signs of Labor

**1) Lightening-** No, not talking about the weather but when baby moves down into the pelvis. You may feel able to breathe easier. This is because as baby drops down it is no longer pressing up on your diaphragm and lungs. You may notice more pelvic pressure as well since baby is lower and now pressing in that area.

**2) Bloody Show and/or Loss of the Mucus Plug-** The opening to the cervix is actually protected by the mucus plug. This keeps the bacteria out while you are pregnant. It isn't so much of a cork but a long and stringy plug. You may notice more discharge that can be gooey or not. Sometimes it will be blood tinged. That is known as bloody show. These are both signs of cervical change!

**3) Nesting-** Did you wake up with an urge to get things in order? Can't get settled until X,Y, or Z is done? Do you feel energized to get these all accomplished NOW?! Then you may be nesting. A sense of urgency to complete things coupled with the actual energy to do them are classic nesting signs.

**4) Contractions-** A low aching sensation, or period like cramps coming and going, may be the beginning of contractions. In early labor they can be pretty spread out (even as far as 20 to 30 mins apart). If you notice a pattern setting in try timing them. They will gradually get longer and stronger together as your uterus is working to bring baby down.

**5) Water Breaking-** At some point your body will cause your membranes to rupture. For some women this will be the start of labor. Very few women will feel a dramatic gush like the movies. Much more likely you won't know if you peed yourself or your water broke. It can feel like a gush or a constant trickle. If the fluid leaking is odorless it may be amniotic fluid. Take note of the color of the fluid, odor, how much fluid leaked or is leaking, and the time of the water breaking. Update your care provider on this information.