

Premature Labor Defined:

The onset of labor prior to 37 weeks.

Incidence of 5-10% of births.

Cause of perinatal loss primarily associated with immaturity of respiratory system, Thermo-regulation and or cardiac system.

Infection, trauma, injury, premature membrane rupture, antepatrum hemorrhage, placenta previa, abrutio placenta are all causes of premature labor.

Signs and symptoms of premature labor:

- Menstrual-like cramps
- Dull low backache that is new or changed in character
- Pelvic pressure
- Increase or change in vaginal discharge
- Intestinal cramping with or without diarrhea
- Regular contractions, either painless or painful, that persist for an hour
- Ruptured membranes.

Ways to prevent and tend to premature labor:

- In the case of ruptured membranes, it is important that the mother check her vagina for the presence of a prolapsed cord. If she feels this, she should wrap the cord in a warm towel and call 911 immediately
- Avoid dehydration as the decrease of fluid in the mother's system will increase the oxytocin concentration and stimulate contractions.
- Submerging in a bath of water up to the neck will allow the body to absorb more water and also decrease oxytocin levels.
- Have the mother lie down and invert pelvis. gently push from beneath the cervix with an I to S direction to take fetal pressure off of the cervix.
- At all costs get the mother to relax and make contact with the baby.
- If drugs are administered, alleviate the mother's fears and encourage her to do the same with the baby.

How to distinguish between true and false labor

FALSE LABOR	TRUE LABOR
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractions stop. • Contractions remain irregular. • Contractions tend to be short. • Contractions are not intense • Walking has no effect on contractions or may even stop them. • Contractions are felt in the lower part of the uterus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractions progress. • Contractions become regular. • Contractions increase in duration. • Contractions increase in intensity. • Walking increases the intensity of contractions. • Contractions are felt in the upper part of uterus.

