

Charles A. Safely, M.D.F.A.C.O.G.
Obstetrics and Gynecology
1252 Harwood Road
Bedford, Texas 76021
817-284-1496



Braxton Hicks Contractions

Braxton Hicks contractions usually begin to rehearse the pregnant uterus for labor sometime during the latter half of pregnancy. Your uterus is flexing its muscles, practicing and preparing itself for the contractions, which will soon push your baby out. You'll feel these contractions as a painless (but possibly uncomfortable) tightening of your uterus, beginning at the top and gradually spreading downward before relaxing. These contractions usually last about 30 seconds (ample time to practice your breathing exercises), but can last as long as 2 minutes or more.

As pregnancy draws to a close in the ninth month, Braxton Hicks contractions begin to get more frequent, intense--sometimes even painful--and thus more difficult to distinguish from true labor contractions. Though they're not efficient enough to deliver your baby, Braxton Hicks contractions may get the pre-birth processes of effacement and dilation started, thereby giving you a leg up on labor before it ever begins.