

### ***False Labor Symptoms***

Real labor probably has not begun if:

- ❖ Contractions are not regular and don't increase in frequency or severity.
- ❖ Pain is in the lower abdomen rather than the lower back.
- ❖ Contractions subside if you walk around or change your position.
- ❖ Show, if any, is brownish. (This is unusually a result of an internal exam or intercourse within the past 48 hours.) Bright red blood requires immediate consultation with your practitioner.
- ❖ Fetal movements intensify briefly with contractions.

### ***Real Labor Symptoms***

When contractions of pre-labor are replaced by stronger, more painful, and more frequent ones, the question arises: "Is this the real thing or false labor?" It is probably real if:

- ❖ The contractions intensify, rather than ease up, with activity and aren't relieved by a change in position or hydration (water).
- ❖ Pain begins in the lower back and spreads to the lower abdomen; it may also radiate to the legs. Contractions may feel like a gastrointestinal upset and be accompanied by diarrhea.
- ❖ Contractions become progressively more frequent and painful, and generally (but not always) more regular. (This progression isn't absolute--not every contraction is more painful or longer than the previous one, but their general intensity does build up as real labor progresses. Nor does frequency always increase in regular, perfectly even intervals--but it does increase.)
- ❖ Show is present and pinkish or blood-streaked.
- ❖ Membranes rupture. In 15% of labors the membranes rupture--either as a gush of waters or a trickle--before labor begins.