

## The Labour Cheat Sheet

### When are you in active labour?

3 in 10 lasting for 60

Three contractions in each 10 minute time span, lasting for 60 seconds each. If you are planning a hospital birth, this is the time to head to the hospital.

### How can I get or keep contractions going?

- Walk, **move** around, rock those hips!
- If you know the **acupressure** points for stimulating labour, apply pressure there.
- Increase your body's oxytocin levels (this is the "**love**" **hormone**", and also is the hormone that causes contractions) through nipple stimulation, kissing or other forms of affection, or wearing a shirt that smells like your partner

### With Every Contaction

- At least a sip of **water** to make sure you stay hydrated

### Once an Hour

- Try to **pee**. An empty bladder gives more room for baby to shift down and move into a good birth position. The position change of getting up and sitting on the toilet is also helpful.

### Labour is intensifying. How to Cope?

- Breathe deeply, slowly and with intention
- Make low sounds, and avoid high-pitched noises if possible.
- Try smelling some lavender oil... very calming!
- Try different positions. Common ones are hands and knees, rocking on the birth ball, leaning forward on a bed or table.
- Apply heat, either with a heating pad, heated blanket, or a warm bath / shower.

### When you feel like you can't do it anymore...

You are likely in the stage of labour called "Transition". This is generally the most intense part of labour, just before your body is ready to push baby out. Many women during this stage feel like they just are not capable of continuing. Remind yourself that this is the shortest stage of labour, and usually means you are close to pushing out your baby.

### Pushing

- Follow your **body's urge to push**
- Think of blowing up a balloon. This a good thing to practice before hand, and to have your doula or other support person remind you of while pushing. The muscles that engage in your perineum when you are **blowing up a balloon** are the same ones used to push baby out. Envision this while pushing to help yourself focus on those muscles.

**Trust yourself. Trust your body. Ask for support.**