

# HOW TO RECOGNISE "TRUE" AND "FALSE" LABOUR

**There is no such thing as false labour, only ripening labour.**

## RIPENING LABOUR

- Irregular contractions/ Irregular intensity. (ex: changing position may increase or reduce their frequency or intensity.)
- Irregular length of contractions (2 seconds to 2 minutes)
- Able to speak and move during the contractions

## TRUE LABOUR

- Regular contractions
- Intensity that increases, a change of position does not change anything in the intensity.
- Regular length of contractions (45 seconds to 1 minutes)
- Unable to speak through a contraction
- Possible small blood loss

## When to call your midwife

- If your water breaks
- If you have regular contractions about 5 minutes apart (from beginning of one contraction to beginning of next) lasting 45 to 60 seconds, for at least an hour, or 2 hours for a first baby.
- If you have vaginal blood loss
- If you are anxious
- If you are uncertain

## If you are uncertain...

If your waters have not broken, and you don't know that you are in active labour, take a warm bath (30 min) or shower and see what happens.

## If this is your first baby...

Try to ignore your contractions completely and go about your daily activities. When this becomes impossible for you, it's the right time to call your midwife!

