

True vs. False Labor (OLD VERSION)

There are several factors involved in true labor, such as changes in the cervix, uterus pituitary glands and hormones. All of these changes induce regular contractions, a bloody show, progressive effacement and dilation, and engagement of the presenting part. The outcome of true labor is birth of the fetus.



PLAY PICMONIC

True Labor

Regular, Strong Contractions

[Regular-intervals of Strong Contracting-muscle](#)

Regular contractions will last for a longer period of time and occur closer together. In addition, strong contractions will occur with increased intensity when walking. Contractions are typically felt in the lower back and radiate to the lower abdomen. Regular, strong contractions occur as a result of increased levels of estrogen and prostaglandins and a decrease in progesterone.

Progressive Effacement and Dilation

[Progressive e-face and Dyed-dilation](#)

Effacement refers to the thinning and shortening of the cervix. Dilation results in the widening of the cervix. In true labor, effacement and dilation will occur in order to allow for the fetus to pass through the birth canal.

Bloody Show

[Blood-drop Show](#)

When true labor occurs, the cervix becomes softened and dilated and effacement occurs; this process is evident by a bloody show, which is the expulsion of cervical mucus that is pinkish in color.

Engagement of Presenting Part

[Engagement-ring of Newborn](#)

Engagement of the presenting part refers to the head of the fetus passing and engaging with the pelvis inlet. Generally, this occurs before the onset of active labor.

False Labor

Irregular Contractions

[Irregular-intervals of Contracting-muscle](#)

In false labor, contractions occur at irregular intervals and often stop when the pregnant woman changes position or walks. Irregular contractions are felt in the abdomen above the umbilicus or in the back.

Cervix Soft

[Soft-and-squishy Cervix-certificate](#)

In false labor, the cervix may be soft, but there is no apparent dilation, effacement, or bloody show.

No Engagement of Presenting Part

[No-more Engagement-ring](#)

When false labor occurs, the fetus does not engage with the pelvic inlet to prepare for active labor.