

Signs of Preterm Labor

If you have any of the following symptoms, let the person in charge of the shelter know immediately and call your health care provider:

- Contractions every 10 minutes or more often
- Leaking fluid or bleeding from your vagina
- The feeling that your baby is pushing down
- Low, dull backache
- Cramps that feel like your period
- Abdominal cramps with or without diarrhea

These could be signs of preterm labor.

Resources:

- An emergency situation can cause a great deal of stress for a family. If you are concerned about your relationship and your safety, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1.800.799.SAFE (7233)**.
- Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS) offers free telephone counseling to women worried about toxic exposures weekdays 8am-6pm Central Time at **1.866.626.6847**.

The March of Dimes is a national voluntary health agency whose mission is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality.

Prepare for Disasters: Special Information For Pregnant Women

Start with following all directions given by the state during an emergency.

Here are some special things to consider.

The needs of a pregnant woman during a disaster or crisis are unique.



Before:

Checklist:

- Call your physician: communicate with your health care provider's office to let them know where you will be; if you plan to leave town bring a copy of your medical records, immunizations and current medications
- Discuss concerns and delivery plans with your health care provider.
- If you have a case manager or participate in a program such as Healthy Start or Nurse Family Partnership, let your care coordinator know where you are going and a phone number to contact you.
- If you have a high-risk pregnancy or you are close to delivery, check with your health care provider to determine the safest option for you.

During:

- Bring any medications you are currently taking, including your prenatal vitamins and your prescriptions.
- Keep a copy of your prenatal medical records with you and contact information for your health care provider in case you have to visit another provider.
- If you are driving, be sure to stop to get out and walk every 1-2 hours.
- Wear comfortable shoes and pack some snacks.
- Remember that maternity clothes may not be available if you evacuate. Pack extra clothes for yourself, including undergarments.

Important Telephone Numbers: Health Care Provider

Case Manager

Hospital

After:

- Being pregnant is a stressful time. Find someone to talk to a few times a day. The fact that you have someone to talk to can be helpful all by itself.
- Drink 8 glasses (8 ounce servings) of water a day.
- Eat several times throughout the day, and try to choose foods that are high in protein and low in fat.
- Take time to lie down and put your feet up a few times a day. You and your baby need to rest often and avoid getting overheated.
- Find a quiet spot to clear your mind of worries and take deep breaths from your belly.
- Know the signs of labor and preterm labor. See back for more information.
- If your health care provider's office is closed, or if you have had to evacuate, you can call a local hospital or parish health unit to get more information about prenatal care and the location of hospitals.