



Onset of childbirth...



Dealing with the latency phase



What is a latency phase?

Your birth can begin with either labor or a rupture of the membranes. The first phase is divided into two stages: the latency phase and the active opening phase. The latency phase (or early opening phase) is the period of time from the onset of labor to a cervical opening of 4-6 cm.

In the latency phase, your contractions should coordinate and progress, your cervix to align and shorten, and your cervix to open. The contractions can sometimes be regular and painful.

The duration of the latency phase is very variable from a few hours to several days. The subsequent active opening phase is characterized by regular, painful contractions, which lead to a progressive opening of your cervix from 4-6 cm until complete opening.



Please note:

Crucial to this sensitive phase of birth is emotional attunement. For this it is important that you feel comfortable in your surroundings. It is not always easy to decide when it's the right time to contact the midwife or the delivery room. The guiding factor here is your subjective feeling.

From the second child onwards, the birth can be faster, and you should also take into account the distance to the birthplace and the following points:

- Are you at least in the last four weeks of pregnancy and is your child in a cranial position?
- Do you still feel comfortable and safe even with the contractions?
- Do you feel that your child is moving in between contractions?

If you answer no to any of these questions, or if you have bleeding, amniotic fluid leakage or persistent pain, you should either contact your midwife or the delivery room or go to them. If you are at risk of pregnancy or have a pre-existing condition, discuss this with your midwife/doctor/delivery room.

How can I deal with the latency phase?

One option is to spend the latency period at home. The advantage of this is that you are in your familiar environment in which you can move freely. There is also the possibility to spend the latency period at the place of birth you have chosen.

It can be helpful if a familiar person supports you during this phase.
If you already have children, organize their care.

As long as possible, try to accept the contractions and do not pay much attention to them. If you are tired, go to sleep without worrying. Strong contractions will always wake you up. If you can't sleep, try to rest during labor pauses.

If it is no longer possible to rest, try to distract yourself.

Possible measures to manage the pain:

Massage



Breathing



Bathing



Showering



Take a walk



Helpful positions:



If you no longer feel comfortable at home, you can go to your chosen place of birth. There they will check the well being of you and your child and the progress of the birth.

If everything is okay and you are still in the latency phase, you will be advised by the professional staff and together you will determine the further procedure.

You may go home again, go for a walk with an escort nearby, or be admitted as an inpatient. A latency phase room may be offered at your place of birth.

It is important that you take your time in the latency phase and avoid building up mental pressure as much as possible. You can always talk to your midwife if you have any uncertainties or fears.

If the pain relief options already mentioned have not helped, you can also receive pain therapy in the delivery room.

A birth is a natural, physiological process from which there can always be deviations. In this text we assume a healthy pregnancy and birth. The publisher is not liable for any disadvantages and damages resulting from the information in this flyer.

Please contact your responsible midwife/doctor/delivery room at any time if you are unsure.

The members of the Hebammenverband Niedersachsen e.V. wish you a pleasant birth. This is also the start of your life as a family. It is therefore all the more important that you yourself help to shape it according to your feelings and wishes. All the best!

Quellenangaben

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