

Active first stage of labour

Active first stage of labour

- Regular contractions, often painful
- Cervix usually fully effaced and ≥ 5 cm dilated
- Dilatation is ≥ 2 cm in four hours: up to 12 hours for nulliparous women, 10 hours for multiparous women
- Contractions are usually ≥ 3 in 10, lasting ≥ 45 seconds and usually palpating at moderate to strong in strength
- Descent of the presenting part
- Signs of second stage

When delay is suspected

Consider possible causes such as:

- Malpresentation
- Arrested cervical dilatation
- Full bladder
- Need for further analgesia
- Reduced frequency and strength of uterine activity
- Cephalopelvic disproportion
- Anxiety/fear/pain

Consider ease or difficulty of access +/-OR transfer to referral services. E.g. Location, capability

Continuous EFM is indicated for prolonged first stage as per RANZCOG Intrapartum Fetal Surveillance

Management options:

- Palpation to assess position and descent
- Offer VE to confirm full dilatation +/- progress
- Offer toilet, consider in/out or in-dwelling catheter
- Offer analgesia
- Change position
- Rehydrate
- Provide emotional/environmental, support and privacy
- Consider offering artificial rupture of membranes (ARM)

Cervical dilatation within expected range

- Continue to monitor progress
- Await events
- Provide supportive care

Repeat VE after 4 hours (or earlier if clinically indicated)

Confirmed delay: Slow or no progress after 4 hours from suspected delay
Medical review and management plan made with the woman

Consider Oxytocic augmentation as per woman's preference and per hospital regime
Have the contractions increased in strength and frequency?

Consider repeat VE after 2 hours (or earlier if clinically indicated)

Consider mode of birth as indicated by total clinical picture and as per woman's preferences

Slow or no progress
Medical review and management plan made with the woman

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 03 9096 1308, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email maternityhandbook@safercare.vic.gov.au

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Australia, Safer Care Victoria, November 2019
ISBN 978-1-76069-077-9 (pdf/online)

Available at www.bettersafercare.vic.gov.au

