

# Paging the On-Call Care Provider: How, Why, & When

A care provider (registered midwife or family physician) is on call for urgent concerns 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The following document will help you determine when to use our urgent paging system.

## Urgent Pregnancy-Related Concerns

**Page** the on-call provider immediately if any of the following issues occur:

- Vaginal bleeding—bright red bleeding that resembles menstrual flow
- Severe abdominal pain that persists beyond a few minutes
- Painful, rhythmic uterine contractions before 37 weeks <10 minutes apart for 1 hour
- Severe headache that does not resolve with Tylenol
- Dizziness that persists after you have had a large glass of water and eaten a meal
- Temperature of 38.0° or higher
- Vomiting lasting more than 24 hours
- Fluid leaking or gushing from the vagina—enough to soak a menstrual pad
- Burning, stinging, or pain with urination
- After 28 weeks, sudden or unusual decreased fetal movement—perform a fetal movement count first, and then page if <6 movements within 2 hours
- Water breaks and the umbilical cord is in the vagina or hanging from the vagina

## Urgent Postpartum Concerns

**Page** the on-call provider immediately with any of the following:

- Vaginal bleeding—completely soaking more than 1 menstrual pad in an hour
- Temperature of 38.0° or higher, sharp abdominal pains, foul-smelling vaginal discharge, or flu-like symptoms such as body aches or muscle weakness
- Pain when you take a deep breath, or not being able to breathe deeply
- Any feelings or thoughts that you might harm yourself or your baby
- If you cannot get your baby to feed, or a temperature of 38.0° or higher for your baby (take baby's temperature under the armpit)

**Call 911** and then page the on-call provider immediately with the following:

- Sudden active labour onset with an urge to push
- Heavy bleeding: passing large clots and soaking through pads quickly
- Newborn unresponsive, not breathing, or gray/blue colour

## How to Page the On-Call Provider Urgently

Call the **Urgent Line** at **778-355-9636**, and press '0' when you first hear the message. A midwife or physician will respond within 15 minutes. Please give your first and last name and the number where you can be reached. Be available to answer the on-call provider's call on the number that you have given to the answering service. When we call, it will usually be from an unidentified number. If your call has not been returned within 15 minutes, page again. If your call has not been returned within 30 minutes and you feel it is serious, please go to RCH hospital or call 911.

## Communicating About Non-Urgent Concerns

The paging system is reserved for urgent situations pertaining to your health or your baby's health. Please do not page urgently for non-urgent concerns. Instead, call **778-355-9636** and press '1' to reach our confidential voicemail. Please leave a detailed message and be sure to include your full name and phone number. We will return your call within 1-2 business days. We do not check messages after 3:30 pm, or on weekends or statutory holidays.

The following are examples of non-urgent concerns.

- Vomiting or diarrhea that has lasted *less* than 24 hours—try Gravol, Imodium, Tylenol, frequent hydration and light, healthy foods for relief
- Yeast infection symptoms
- Allergy or cold symptoms, or questions re: what medication is safe to take
- Requests for:
  - Test results, or to discuss results you have read on myeHealth
  - Forms or letters for employers and/or fitness classes
  - Renewing a prescription
  - Referrals to other health-care providers
  - Lab test or ultrasound requisitions
- Questions about the timing of your scheduled home visit
- Loss of your mucus plug but not in labour
- “Heads up” that you think you might go into labour later that day

For postpartum concerns—if you aren't sure if the concern is urgent, please review the *After the Birth FAQ* handout prior to calling or paging.

## Administrative Questions

To arrange care with us, to book or change appointments, or if you are running late for an appointment, please call our office at **778-355-9596** and speak to one of our office staff members.

## E-mail

If you have urgent health concerns during your pregnancy or postpartum period, page the on-call care provider. Please do not send an e-mail containing private information about your health. For non-clinical concerns, feel free to contact us at [info@inletbirth.ca](mailto:info@inletbirth.ca).

**Note:** We do not answer clinical questions via e-mail, as it is not a secure medium for sensitive, private information. Our e-mail inbox is not monitored every day. Your messages will generally be responded to within 1-2 business days.

## Appropriate E-mail Questions

- Requests to make or change an appointment
- Requests for forms or letters for employers and/or fitness classes
- Questions about the safety of supplements, herbal teas, spa treatments, etc.
- Non-urgent questions that cannot wait until your next appointment