Normal birth: initial assessment

Care is woman centred and includes informed choice, consent, privacy and respectful communication. Contemporaneous documentation is essential.

**Pregnant woman with signs of labour at term**

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**Initial contact**
- Reason for presentation/contact
- Preferences for labour and birth
- Emotional and psychological needs

**Review history**
- Verbal
- Pregnancy Health Record/antenatal records
- Obstetric, gynaecological, medical, surgical, social, family history
- Investigations and results
- Medications and allergies
- Pregnancy complications
- Psychosocial, cultural and spiritual

**Contraction**
- Time commenced
- Duration, strength, frequency and resting tone

**Maternal observations**
- Temperature, pulse, respiratory rate, BP
- Urinalysis
- Nutritional and hydration status
- General appearance

**Abdominal assessment**
- Observation and palpation
- Fundal height, lie, presentation, attitude, position, engagement/descent, liquor volume

**Fetal wellbeing**
- Ask about fetal movements
- Auscultate FHR towards the end of contraction and continue for at least 30–60 seconds after contraction finished
- Differentiate fetal heart beat from maternal pulse

**Vaginal loss**
- Nil, discharge, liquor, blood
- Note colour, odour, amount, and consistency

**Vaginal examination**
- If stage of labour uncertain, may assist decision making
- If SROM consider speculum examination

**Discomfort and pain**
- Reassure, promote, reinforce coping strategies
- Assess response to contractions
- Review birth plan and note preferences
- Discuss advantages/disadvantages of options

**Repeat contacts**
- Review entire contact history and clinical circumstances with each contact
- Refer/consult/request woman to present for assessment as required

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**Discuss, consult, refer, manage as per professional\^ and Queensland guidelines**

- **Risk factors?**
  - **Yes**
  - **No**

- **Triage stage of labour**
  - **Not yet in labour**
    - Antenatal assessment
      - **First stage**
        - Refer to flow chart: *Normal Birth–First stage*
      - **Second stage**
        - Refer to flow chart: *Normal Birth–Second stage*

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**BP**: blood pressure, **FHR**: fetal heart rate, **VE**: vaginal examination, **SROM**: spontaneous rupture of membranes.
