

After your waters break

Maternity Department Patient Information Leaflet



Please return to:
On:
Date:
Time:

Introduction

This leaflet is for pregnant women. It gives information about what happens if your waters break when you are more than 37 weeks pregnant and you are not having contractions.

What happens if my waters have broken and I am not in labour?

Sometimes a woman's waters break before labour starts. This happens in about one in 20 pregnancies and is known medically as pre-labour rupture of the membranes (PROM).

When this happens, the length of time between the waters breaking and the contractions beginning varies. Nine out of 10 women will go into labour on their own within 24 hours.

If you think your waters have broken, you should contact the Maternity Triage Department on 01384 456111 ext. 3053 and speak to a midwife for advice. The triage midwife may arrange for you to come into the hospital.

Does it matter if I am not contracting when my waters break?

A delay of less than 24 hours between your waters breaking and contractions starting is unlikely to affect your labour.

However, there can be an increased risk of infection to your baby if contractions have not started within 24 hours of your waters breaking. This is because the sac of 'waters' or amniotic fluid provides some protection from infection to your baby if it remains unbroken.

What happens when it is confirmed that my waters have broken?

The hospital midwife will confirm if your waters have broken. If you and baby are well, the midwife will give you the choice of:

- Induction of labour as soon as possible.
- Going home to wait and see if your contractions start (expectant management) for up to 24 hours.

If you choose induction of labour, you will be admitted for this to be commenced as soon as possible. If you choose expectant management, the midwife will give you a date and time to return to the hospital, if your labour has not started within 24 hours of your waters breaking. If the 24 hours falls in the middle of the night, we will invite you to return at 8am the next morning.

We may recommend that your labour is started sooner in these cases:

- If you know, or the midwife finds, that you are a carrier of bacteria called Group B streptococcus (GBS).
- A problem is found with you or your baby when you come to hospital.

We will discuss this in more detail with you and your partner.

What should I do if I choose to wait at home (expectant management)?

Wear a sanitary towel so you can check the colour and smell of the water you are losing.

Contact the Maternity Triage Department on **01384 456111 ext. 3053** immediately if your waters become coloured (green, brown or blood stained) or start to smell horrible. You should also contact the Maternity Triage Department if:

- You start having contractions (labour pains) that are regular and last 60 seconds or more.
- You experience constant pain.
- Your baby's movements change.
- You feel unwell or you have a temperature.
- You have any bleeding.
- You have any other concerns.

Other advice:

- You can shower or bath as you would normally.
- You should avoid having sex as this may increase the risk of infection.
- Return to the Maternity Unit at the agreed time written on the front of this leaflet.

If you go into labour within 24 hours of your waters breaking, no further treatment is needed.

What happens if I have chosen expectant management and I do not have contractions within 24 hours?

We will suggest that you come to the Maternity Ward for an induction of labour. This is when we try to start your labour for you.

Labour can be started by either a pessary inserted into your vagina or a drip that contains a hormone to start your contractions. Your midwife will discuss this with you and offer you an 'Induction of labour' leaflet when you arrive.

During your labour, we may need to give you antibiotics about once every four hours when your contractions are regular and your cervix (neck of your womb) is opening. These will be given until your baby is born. If they are required, the midwife caring for you will explain the reason why.

What if I do not want an induction of labour?

If you do not want your labour to be induced after waiting 24 hours, please discuss this with a midwife.

Can I find out more?

This leaflet explains what happens when your waters break at this hospital. The following weblinks give general information about the subject:

- <http://www.nhsinform.co.uk/health-library/articles//labour/symptoms>
- <http://www.babycentre.co.uk/a1053562/when-your-waters-break>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Maternity Triage Department on 01384 456111 ext. 3053

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/maternity/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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