

## Patient information

# When your waters break after 37 weeks of pregnancy

You will have been given this leaflet because you are going home after your waters have broken, but before your contractions have started. The water around the baby is called liquor.

Sometimes a woman's waters break before labour starts. This happens in 8-10% of all pregnancies and is known as pre-labour rupture of the membranes (or PROM). When this happens, it is estimated around 90% of women will go into labour naturally within 24 hours

If you are more than 37 weeks pregnant and your waters have broken but you have not gone into labour and both you and your baby are well, you will be advised to:

- Allow 24 hours to see if labour will start naturally
- Induction of labour either after 24 hours or before depending on individual circumstances
- Call Labour Suite 01284 712798 immediately if you have Group B Streptococcus (GBS)

Induction of labour is recommended after 24 hours by current national guidelines to reduce the risk of infection to you or your baby.

If your waters break before you go into labour, your chances of having a caesarean section will not be increased whilst waiting for labour to start.

You will be asked to:

- Check your temperature four times a day when awake

- Check for changes in the colour or smell of your liquor
- Check for any other signs of fever (e.g. shivers, flushing)

In the time you are at home, we would like you to check your temperature, colour of the liquor and how your baby is moving every 4 hours whilst awake.

Bathing or showering is not associated with an increase in infection but having sexual intercourse may be. Do not have sexual intercourse after your membranes have ruptured.

It is very important to be aware of your baby's activity. A change or a reduction in movements may be a sign that your baby is unwell. You should already be familiar with your baby's typical daily pattern of movements. If you feel your baby's typical daily pattern of movements have decreased, contact your midwife or the Maternity Day Assessment Unit on 01284 712723 immediately (or Labour Suite between 8.00pm and 8.00am)

If you feel your baby's movements have decreased, you feel unwell, your temperature is 37.5°C on two occasions, four hours apart or one reading of 38 degrees or above, or there is a change in the colour or smell of the water, please telephone Labour Suite 01284 712798 immediately.

If you do not go into labour, you will be given a time and day to return to Antenatal Ward F11 where your labour will be started artificially (induction of labour), as it has not begun naturally. More information regarding induction of labour can be found on the West Suffolk Hospital web page (search in maternity leaflets).

Once your waters have broken for a period longer than 24 hours, it is recommended that you deliver in a unit with access to specialist baby doctors (paediatricians), and that after the birth you stay in hospital for 12 hours so that your baby can be observed closely for any signs of infection. The midwife and/or doctor managing your care will discuss this with you.

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>*



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**Keeping records of yours and your baby's wellbeing:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Temperature</b>	<b>Babies movements</b>	<b>Waters color</b>