

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 your waters break before labour starts. This happens in 8-10% of pregnancies and is known as pre-labour rupture of the membranes (or PROM). When this happens, it is estimated about 90% will go into labour naturally within twenty-four 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 offered the following:

- allow 24 hours to see if labour will start naturally
- induction of labour either after 24 hours, or before, depending on individual circumstances.

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

If you have been informed that any tests taken within this pregnancy have tested positive with Group B Streptococcus (GBS), or you were positive in a previous pregnancy and your baby required treatment, please let your midwife know.

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
- check for changes in the colour or odour 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, color of the liquor and how your baby is moving every 4 hours.

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 the triage assessment unit on 01284 712723 immediately.

If you feel your baby's movements have decreased, you feel unwell, your temperature is 37.5°C or above, or there is a change in the colour of the water, please telephone 01284 712723 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.

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.

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.

Clinical research

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk. This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

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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