

When your waters break after 37 weeks

An information guide



When your waters break after 37 weeks

If you have a full term normal pregnancy and your waters break, the “wait and see” approach for the first 24 hours is recommended because six out of ten women will go into labour during that time.

If you do not go into labour within 24 hours NICE (National Institute for Clinical Excellence) advise that labour is induced.

You may choose however to wait up to a maximum of 72 hours before your labour is induced as long as you and your baby stay well. We will make sure of this by asking you to do a few simple checks at home.

Your midwife will have given you a **shared decision grid** to help you to decide which option is best for you. This information leaflet will explain what happens next.

Shared decision grid for low risk women with rupture of membranes at term

Pros of induction of labour around 24 hours	Pros of waiting up to 72 hours)
<p>60% of women with rupture of membranes will go into labour naturally within 24 hours. Waiting gives your body time to respond to this natural process.</p> <p>If you don't go into labour within the first 24 hours there is a 60% chance you won't labour within 72 hours (i.e. quite likely to need induction of labour).</p> <p>If you were planning to have your baby in the Birth Centre this may still be possible</p> <p>There is a higher chance of your baby becoming infected with prolonged rupture of membranes</p>	<p>If you have not gone into labour by 24 hours after rupture of membranes there is a 4 in 10 chance of labouing before 72 hours.</p>
Cons	Cons
<p>You won't need to attend the hospital on a daily basis for assessment</p>	<p>You will need to attend the hospital on a daily basis for assessment until you go into labour – or you decide to be induced</p> <p>There is a higher chance of you and your baby becoming infected with prolonged rupture of membranes.</p>

What happens during the first 24 hours?

Having a bath or shower is not associated with an increase in infection, but sexual intercourse may be and so should be avoided.

During this 24 hours at home you will be asked to fill in the self assessment chart on pages 5 and 6 which you should bring to all appointments.

These checks include:

- Checking the colour and smell of your vaginal loss when you change a pad
- Noticing any changes to your baby's movements
- Taking your temperature every four hours.

You must contact us immediately if:

- You feel unwell
- Your temperature is 37.4°C or above
- You feel your heart beating very fast
- Your vaginal loss doesn't smell normal
- Your vaginal loss changes colour to a brownish green
- Your vaginal loss changes to bright red
- Your baby doesn't move as much as normal
- Your abdomen is tender
- If you feel pain around a previous caesarean section scar
- You have any concerns.

What happens if I think labour has started?

Great! Contact the Labour Ward or Birth Centre for advice. As a guide you should be having three regular painful contractions in each ten minute period. The contact numbers are on the front of your green Personal Maternity Record.

What happens if I do not go into labour during the first 24 hours?

You will be given an appointment to return for further assessment. After checking that you and your baby are well the midwife will discuss the choices available to you. These choices will be to go home and wait a further 24 hours or have your labour induced.

- If you chose to wait a further 24 hours you will continue completing the self assessment chart at home
- If you choose induction of labour the midwife will arrange admission. Please note that you may not be able to be induced straight away if the maternity unit is very busy.

What happens if labour has not started after 48 hours?

The same procedure as described above. You may choose to wait a further 24 hours completing the self assessment chart as before, or you may choose to be induced.

What happens if labour has still not started after 72 hours?

We would now recommend induction of labour. If following discussion you are happy to proceed, the midwife will make arrangements for you to be admitted to the antenatal ward to start the induction process. Ask your midwife for the information leaflet 'Induction of Labour'.

Addressograph Label:

Self Assessment Chart

You must complete the chart every 4 hours, but if you are sleeping do them as soon as you wake up

- Note frequency and amount of baby movements compared to normal
- Check colour & smell of vaginal loss it should be colourless and have no smell

Date	Time	Temperature	Baby Movements	Vaginal Loss
<i>example</i>	<i>02.00</i>	<i>36°6</i>	<i>As usual</i>	<i>Colourless water with no smell</i>
If all these checks are OK – return to the MAU / ANDU/triage/Birth Centre on date & time Tel.				

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If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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إذا لم تكن الإنجليزية هي لغتك الأولى وتحتاج إلى مساعدة ، فيرجى الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة الشفوية والتحريرية

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For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

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Date of publication: July 2006

Date of review: November 2019

Date of next review: November 2021

Ref: PI_WC_251

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