

# **If your waters break before labour starts**

Information for women about pre-labour rupture of membranes (PROM)

---

## **To provide information to women on what to do if her water breaks before labour starts.**

---

### **What is PROM?**

Sometimes, a woman's waters break before labour starts. This happens in about 1 in 20 pregnancies and is known as pre-labour rupture of the membranes or PROM.

If you are given this leaflet by a midwife, it will mean that she has diagnosed PROM, you and the midwife have discussed your diagnosis and decided that it is safe for you to go home and wait for your labour to start. It is likely that this will happen naturally within 24 hours.

### **Things to look out for once your waters have broken**

You should contact the Triage line if:

- You feel unwell or feverish. We advise you check your temperature twice a day, contact us if it is above 37.2 degrees centigrade.
- Your waters become brown, green or bloodstained.
- Your baby's movements change, slow down or stop.
- You go into labour.
- You are worried for any reason.

**Please ring 0118 322 7304 at any time for advice.**

### **If you do not go into labour after PROM**

If you do not go into labour spontaneously after your waters have broken, please phone the Delivery Suite on

\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

Ring **0118 322 7215** to confirm a bed is available before you are admitted.

Your admission will be a priority. However, if the Delivery Suite is very busy, the midwife in charge will arrange a time for your admission, depending on circumstances at the time.

## **What happens when I come in?**

If you are more than 37 weeks pregnant and your waters have broken, but you have not gone into labour (i.e. you are not having contractions) you will be admitted to either the Day Assessment Unit or Delivery Suite. The midwife will assess you and monitor your baby's heart rate. A vaginal examination will be necessary to decide the next stage of treatment. If on examination the cervix is not dilated or thinning out, we recommend that Prostin gel is then inserted around the cervix. This is a hormone that helps to "ripen" the cervix for labour and stimulates contractions.

Following the insertion of Prostin, you will be admitted to the antenatal ward or induction suite until the review in 6 hours. If contractions do not start within this six hour period we would recommend a hormone infusion to encourage contractions. Oxytocin is given through a drip and enters the bloodstream through a tiny tube into a vein in the arm. Your midwife will explain this to you further. For this to happen you will need to be transferred to the Delivery Suite and be cared for by a midwife. Therefore, occasionally there is a short delay until we can arrange this.

## Further information

- NICE guideline – Induction of labour CG 70  
<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG70/PublicInfo/pdf/English>

Also:

- <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/11837/36280/36280.pdf>
- <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/12012/41272/41272.pdf>
- <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/12012/41255/41255.pdf>

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

Consultant Midwife, June 2004

Reviewed: September 2021

Next review due: September 2023