

If labour starts naturally after 24 hours, it is your choice whether you have the recommended continuous fetal heart rate monitoring in labour and/or antibiotics. We offer both choices.

### Is the Birth Centre an option?

If everything else is normal and your baby's movements have been normal for you, then giving birth on the birth centre is an option if labour has commenced within 72 hours of your waters breaking. On the birth centre we do not offer continuous fetal heart rate monitoring during labour or antibiotics. However, we will observe you closely for signs of infection or any fetal heart rate problems when we listen to your baby at regular intervals.

### Care for your baby following birth.

We recommend that you stay in hospital for a minimum of 12 hours so that we can observe your baby for any sign of infection.

If you are worried or labour has started please telephone either:

**Triage - 0121 472 1377 ask for extension 4089**

OR

**The Birth Centre - 0121 623 6907** (if this is where you plan to have your baby or you plan to have your baby at home).

**If you have chosen Induction of labour after 24 hours** of your waters breaking, please telephone **Ward 1** on **0121 627 2751** to ensure that a bed is available for you.

**If you have chosen to wait for labour to start naturally** we will need to arrange for you to have your baby's wellbeing checked every 24 hours with a midwife at a convenient place such as; with your community midwife or hospital.

Birmingham Women's NHS Foundation Trust is committed to involving women in the development of our services.

We would appreciate any suggestions or comments you may have regarding this information leaflet.

#### **YOU CAN RESPOND BY:**

##### ***Telephone:***

Patient Advice and Information Centre  
0121 627 2747

##### ***E-mail:***

[helen.oxton@bwhct.nhs.uk](mailto:helen.oxton@bwhct.nhs.uk)

##### ***Writing:***

Patient Advice and Information Centre  
Birmingham Women's NHS Foundation Trust  
Edgbaston  
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B15 2TG

# *Premature Rupture of Membrane (PROM)*

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For further information visit the  
Birmingham Women's NHS  
Foundation Trust Website  
[www.bwhct.nhs.uk](http://www.bwhct.nhs.uk)

Birmingham Women's   
NHS Foundation Trust

Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TG  
Tel: 0121 472 1377 Fax: 0121 627 2602

**Choices available once  
your waters have broken  
at term (after 37 weeks)**

## What does 'waters broken' or 'ruptured membranes' mean?

Your baby is surrounded by a bag of water which has broken. This means that the fluid (or liquor) will leak from now until your baby is born. This is usually referred to as waters (or membranes) breaking.

## When are my waters likely to break?

Your waters are most likely to break once you are in labour. However for 1 in 10 women, waters break before labour starts.

## Do I need to do anything?

If you are uncertain whether your waters have broken or not, we ask that you wear a pad and walk around for a while. If you are at home and your pad is wet we recommend that you **telephone** either triage on **0121 472 1377** ask for extension **4089** or if you are booked for the birth centre **telephone 0121 623 6907**. A midwife, (usually at hospital) will then see you. You might be offered an examination to look at the opening of the neck of the womb (cervix) to see if there is any obvious fluid draining.

It is important that we know for sure if your waters have broken. We need to note the time it happened and make a plan of care with you based upon a number of choices as follows which will also be explained to you.

## What is recommended?

**That you wait for 24 hours for labour to start naturally** ideally at home (unless we have concerns about you or your baby).

**Why?** This is because you are likely to go into labour yourself during this time (6 out of 10 women will go into labour within 24 hours). There is no proof that either you or your baby will come to any harm by waiting.

## While waiting for labour to start we advise that:

- You observe your temperature every 4 hours while you are awake and report fever above 37.5°C. If you do not have a thermometer, contact the hospital if you feel unwell, flu-like or feverish.
- Observe your vaginal loss. Contact the hospital immediately if there is a change in the colour (other than clear) or the fluid smells offensive.
- Observe your baby's movements. If there is a decrease in movements, contact the hospital immediately.
- Showering or baths are not thought to increase infection but sexual intercourse might.

## What happens if labour has not started naturally within 24 hours of my waters breaking?

Because there is a slightly increased chance of infection developing it is recommended that:

### You give birth in hospital

**Why?** If your baby becomes infected, the necessary medical facilities are at hand should they be needed.

### You have your labour started off (induced) after 24 hours (or at the earliest convenient time).

**Why?** Because the risk of your baby becoming infected increases once your waters have broken for more than 24 hours.

**How will I be induced?** Either by a hormone pessary (prostaglandin) inserted into your vagina to help your contractions to start or a hormone drip (syntocinon), or both (please see our Induction of Labour leaflet for further information. This can be found on our website [www.bwhct.nhs.uk](http://www.bwhct.nhs.uk)).

## Antibiotics are offered to you.

**Why?** To reduce the chance of your baby becoming infected. The organism called group b streptococcus is an infection which can cause serious health problems for your baby. Unfortunately, we are unable to check which women carry it and which do not. Once your waters have been broken for over 24 hours, the chances of your baby becoming seriously infected is about 1 baby per 100.

**When will the antibiotics be given?** Once your waters have been broken for more than 18 hours **and** labour **has become established**.

**How are the antibiotics given?** By a drip into a vein in your hand or arm.

## Continuous monitoring of your baby's heart rate will be offered during labour.

**Why?** So that early signs of an infection in your baby can be picked up.

### How will my baby's heart rate be monitored?

Using a (cardiotocograph) (CTG) machine. The CTG has two pads held onto your abdomen. One pad picks up your baby's heart rate and the other pad picks up your contractions. The machine is kept on until your baby is born and only available on delivery suite in hospital.

**You remain in hospital for a minimum of 12 hours following your birth.** During this time we will observe your baby for any signs of infection.

The above information is based upon national recommendations. However, you may wish to decline the advice. The following information might assist you to consider alternatives which might suit you and your preferences.

## I wish to wait longer than 24 hours for labour to start naturally.

While waiting, we recommend that you:

- Follow the information 'while waiting for labour to start' (outlined above).
- See a midwife at your surgery or return to hospital every 24 hours to have your baby's wellbeing checked i.e. heart rate and movements.
- Agree to induction of labour within 72- 96 hours if labour has not started naturally.
- Let us know if you change your mind about waiting for labour to start naturally (**Ward 1 - 0121 627 2751**).