



Patient Information

Advice for women going home with Ruptured Membranes

What is meant by 'Ruptured Membranes'?

Inside the Uterus (womb) the baby is surrounded by a fluid known as amniotic fluid. This fluid is held within a sac formed by two membranes. When your waters break the fluid around the baby can drain away, causing fluid loss from the vagina. This can happen before and during labour.

Why do membranes rupture?

The exact cause is not really known, however it may be related to changes in the body that influence the start of labour, for example the influence of the hormones that start the contractions in labour.

What happens if my membranes ruptured?

It is important to attend the White Horse Birth Centre or Delivery Suite for a check-up if you think your waters have broken in order to check both you and the baby are okay and confirm the membranes have ruptured.

What are my options?

There are options if your waters break before the start of labour but it is important for you to have the correct information to help you make a decision that you are happy with.

60% of women whose waters break prior to labour will go into labour within 24 hours

- The risk of serious neonatal infection is small at 1%, rather than 0.5% for women with intact membranes.
- Induction of labour is appropriate approximately 24 hours after rupture of the membranes. (NICE 2017 updated version)



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If you would like more information please go to www.NICE.org and see the NICE pathways on antibiotics for early-onset neonatal infection and induction of labour.

The midwife looking after you will explain the options to you which are:

- If all well to return home for up to 24 hours to await the start of labour. If you do not go into established labour within 24 hours then you will be advised to return to Delivery Suite to start the induction process.
- If you have a complicated pregnancy (for example previous caesarean) we will admit you to hospital to await events where the midwives can regularly monitor you and your baby's wellbeing. Then offer induction when there is a space available for you.
- If you are known to be Group B Streptococcus positive you should have been offered immediate induction of labour.
- You can request induction of labour sooner than 24 hours. In this case you will be offered induction as soon as there is a space available for you.

Why should I choose to go home?

There is evidence that your labour is more likely to progress well if you go into labour spontaneously. Also you are in your own environment where you can walk around, rest and eat and drink normally with in the privacy of your own home.

Is there anything I need to know when I go home?

Once your waters have broken the barrier to infection has gone and so it is important that you are aware of the following things in order to detect if you need to return to the hospital earlier.

- Record your temperature every 4 hours when awake and call hospital if you feel unwell or the temperature is above 37.5 degrees.
- Call the hospital if the fluid draining changes colour to green, blood stained or smells offensive.



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- Bathing and showering is safe and not associated with an increase in infection but sexual intercourse may be. Please wash hands before and after changing sanitary towels in order to reduce transmission of infection.

If the baby's movements change from the normal pattern

Always seek professional help immediately. Never go to sleep ignoring a reduction or change in your baby's movements. Do not rely on any home kits you may have for listening to your baby's heartbeat. You must contact your midwife or local maternity unit immediately. You must not wait until the next day to seek help. (RCOG 2019)

What happens next?

If you have not gone into labour within 24 hours you will be given a time to return to Delivery Suite to be admitted and have your labour induced. Your baby will be checked regularly for 12 hours after delivery to monitor for infection.

The time of your admission to delivery suite will be.....

References

RCOG (2019), <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines>

NICE (2017), <https://www.nice.org.uk>

From 1st January 2019 smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

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