


Information for patients and carers

Pre-labour rupture of membranes

When your waters break before labour pains start
after 37 weeks of pregnancy.

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping, wavy bands of blue color, transitioning from a lighter blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom.

What is a pre-labour rupture of membranes?

1 in 20 women experience pre-labour rupture of membranes where their waters break before labour contractions have started.

Pre-labour rupture of membranes is known to increase the risk of infection to the baby after birth to 1 in 100 from 1 in 200.

There is no increased risk of serious infection during the 24-hour period following membrane rupture if mother and baby are well. The checks we have performed suggest that both you and your baby are well.

6 out of 10 women will go into labour naturally in the 24 hours following membrane rupture.

Your choices:

- Return home for up to 24 hours to wait for your contractions to start naturally. During this time, you should take your temperature every 4 hours using the Tempadots you have been given
- Stay in hospital and have your labour started off (induced) using vaginal pessaries (prostaglandins) or a drip (oxytocin). Further information about these procedures is contained in the leaflet Induction of labour and membrane sweep; this is available from your midwife

When should I contact the hospital again?

- **Twenty-four hours after your membrane rupture** (even if this is during the night) you will need to come to the Sharoe Green Unit for further monitoring and to make plans for your baby's birth. Please remember to bring your hand-held notes and your labour bag

At any time in the 24 hour period, if you experience any of the following, contact the maternity assessment suite on 01772 524495:

- You think your labour has started
- Your temperature rises above 37°C
- You feel unwell, particularly if you feel hot and feverish, or cold and shivery
- You see any change in the colour of the waters from a clear or slightly pink colour. Wearing a sanitary pad will help you check this
- Your vaginal loss/waters become smelly
- Your baby's pattern of movements seems to have changed
- You have any concerns

Whilst at home

Carry on with your normal activities as far as possible. Rest as you feel you need and eat and drink at regular intervals. Having a bath can help you to relax and will not increase the risk of infection to your baby.

You should avoid having sex as it increases your baby's risk of infection now your waters have broken.

After your baby's birth

You will need to stay at the Sharoe Green Unit for a minimum of 12 hours so that you and your baby can be monitored for signs of infection. Antibiotics are only given if signs of infection are present.

The planning of your postnatal care after this time will depend on your individual needs and those of your baby.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please telephone:

The maternity assessment suite on **01772 524495**.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

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