



What to expect when your waters break

Ruptured membranes

Broken waters (also known as amniotic fluid or liquor) occur in 6 - 19% of women at the end of their pregnancy.

Most of these women go into labour by themselves. Approximately 70% of these women will give birth within 24 hours of their waters breaking and almost 90% will give birth within 48 hours.

If you think your waters may have broken please contact the midwives in the Birth Unit for advice. Midwives are available 24 hours a day.

What happens next?

If your waters have broken and you are not in labour yet:

- We will check to see if the swab taken late in your pregnancy for Group B strep is negative.
- If negative, we will recommend you go home and wait for labour to commence. The majority of women will labour naturally within the next two days.
- Continue with your normal routine.
- Take your temperature every four hours when you are awake. Take it also if you feel hot or unwell.
- We will need to assess you and your baby, so you will need to come to the hospital daily.
- Remember to change your pads regularly. Do not use tampons.

Important signs to look for at home:

- The colour of the water should be clear or pinkish.
- If the water changes to green or brown, call the Birth Unit.
- The water usually smells sweet.

Contact your birth unit and speak to a midwife (available 24 hours a day) if:

- Your water smell becomes unpleasant.
- You have a bright vaginal blood loss.
- Your temperature is over 37.4°C.
- You feel unwell or have flu like symptoms.
- You notice any change or decrease in your baby's movements.
- You are having regular painful contractions or constant abdominal pain.
- You need pain relief regardless of frequency of contractions.

What to avoid when your waters have broken

- You should not use pools, baths or spas.
- You should not have sexual intercourse.

These activities may increase the risk of infection once your waters have broken.



Follow up

An appointment has been made for you for a follow up assessment and fetal monitoring.

Date: _____ Time: _____

Nepean Hospital Fetal Maternal Assessment Unit
(next to the Birth Unit, Level 2 South Block)

Blue Mountains Hospital Maternity Ward

Lithgow Hospital Maternity Ward

If you do not go into labour spontaneously we will assist your baby's birth by inducing your labour.

Your induction of labour has been booked for: _____

Birth Unit Contact Information

Blue Mountains
(02) 4784 6572

Nepean
(02) 4734 2295 or (02) 4734 2294

Lithgow
(02) 6350 2324



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