York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Going home when your waters have broken

Information for patients, relatives and carers

ⓘ For more information, please contact

Triage, Maternity services

York Hospital
Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Telephone: 01904 726869

Or

Scarborough Hospital

Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, YO12 6QL

Telephone: 01723 236869

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Introduction

Pre labour rupture of membranes (PROM) is the term used when your waters have broken before your labour starts. This means that the protective sac of fluid around your baby, now has a hole in it that is allowing the water to drain away. Most women go into labour soon after their waters break. 60% of women go into labour without intervention within 24 hours. 91% of women go into labour naturally within 48 hours.

If you are more than 37 weeks pregnant and your waters break but you do not go into labour, you will be offered immediate induction of labour or conservative management for a period of 24 hours.

Conservative management (watch and wait for 24 hours) will be offered if you do not show any signs of infection where an appointment to come for induction of labour approximately 24 hours later will be given. This is because there is a small risk of an infection developing in the amniotic fluid surrounding your baby. This may affect you and/or your baby. As the length of time between your waters breaking and your baby being born increases, so does the likelihood of an infection developing.

At York and Scarborough Hospitals induction of labour can be offered from the moment your waters have broken up to 24hours after, this will depend on your individual circumstances. You can also request induction if this is your preference. Your baby will be closely monitored in labour and following the birth if your waters have been broken for longer than 24 hours. This is to monitor for any signs of infection and for this it is recommended that you and your baby remain in hospital for 24 hours following the birth.

What happens next?

It is safe for you to go home after your waters have broken, to wait for your labour to start.

You may find that you are not at home for a long time before you start contracting regularly and need to return to the hospital. Or you may remain at home until you have agreed with your midwife to return to the hospital for your labour to be induced.

Your midwife may advise you to remain and mobilise around the hospital if you are already having regular contractions.

What do I need to do at home?

- Monitor the colour of your waters. Your waters should be clear/pink coloured.
- Monitor your temperature every four hours whilst you are awake. Your midwife will give you some thermometers to take home.
- Monitor your baby's movements. Your baby should continue to move as normal once your waters have broken and when you are having contractions.
- You can eat and drink as normal. It is really important that you drink plenty to remain hydrated.
- You can have a bath or shower with plain water. Do not add any bubble bath or oils to the water.
- Avoid sexual intercourse.
- Remain as active as possible; this will encourage your contractions to start.

When do I need to contact the hospital?

- When you are having regular, painful contractions.
- If your waters change colour. Your waters should be clear/pink coloured. Contact the hospital if your waters are green or brown coloured, or if you are bleeding.
- If your waters have an unpleasant smell.
- If your temperature is above 37.5°C.
- If you feel unwell.
- If you are worried about your baby's movements.
- If you have constant severe abdominal pain.
- If you have any other concerns or questions.

Contact numbers

If you are contacting us regularly or have any concerns, contact:

York:	01904 726869
Scarborough:	01723 236869

To arrange to come in for your induction of labour:

York Antenatal Ward:	01904 726869 (option 3)
Scarborough Labour Ward:	01723 236869 (option 3)

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact: Maternity Services York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE, Telephone: 01904 631313, Scarborough Hospital, Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, YO12 6QL, Telephone: 01723 368111

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website: www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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