



What to do if your bag of water breaks

The bag of water can break with a big “gush” of fluid or with a steady trickle that leaks slowly. Contractions can start anywhere from 10 minutes to 24 hours after your water breaks. Some people feel the bag pop when it breaks. If it is a big gush, you can be pretty sure that it is your bag of water. If it is a trickle, you may not be sure. If you think your water might be broken, this is what you should do:

1. If you are less than 37 weeks pregnant OR the water is greenish or yellowish-green in color, page your midwife right away.
2. If the baby is NOT head down, page the midwife right away (your midwife should have told you the baby’s position at your last prenatal visit. If she doesn’t, ask her at the visit.)
3. If you have a history of infection with either the herpes virus or the Group B strep bacteria, notify your midwife of that fact when you call her about your water being broken. You should page the midwife at the time your water breaks if you have a history of either herpes or Group B strep.
4. If you are 37 or more weeks pregnant, the baby is head down, and the fluid you are leaking is clear, RELAX. If 1, 2, or 3 above do not apply to you, then follow the directions below. Some labors begin with the water breaking first. IT IS NOT AN EMERGENCY AND YOU DO NOT NEED TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL.
5. If you notice your water is leaking during the daytime (9am to 10pm), page your midwife and tell her what happened. She will talk with you about what to do next.
6. If you notice your water is leaking during the night time (10pm to 9am), put on a pad and go to bed (as long as #4 applies). Page your midwife in the morning and let her know that you think your water is broken. She will talk with you about what to do next.
7. If your labor starts, day or night, after your water breaks, page your midwife. If it is your first baby, wait until the contractions have been 5 minutes apart for at least 2 hours. If you have had other babies before, ask the midwife at one of your prenatal visits about when to call once you start labor. It will depend on how fast your other labors were.