



If your bag of water breaks

When your bag of water breaks, it is usually a sign that labor is beginning or has already begun and is progressing. That's why we like you to call us as soon as it happens. We do need to check a few things when it happens. Hopefully, yours won't break while at the supermarket, church, or the bus to work (as happened to a friend of mine)!

If your bag of water breaks, please make the following observations and **CALL** your midwife **IMMEDIATELY**:

- Amount of fluid—trickle, gush, soaked the bed or clothes
- Color of fluid—usually it is clear, but it may be pink, red, greenish, or brownish
- Odor of fluid—usually it is almost odorless, but a bad or foul odor may mean an infection

Once your water breaks, please take the following precautions to minimize the chance of developing an infection:

- Put nothing in the vagina: no tampons, no sexual intercourse, no fingers (do not check your cervix), no tub baths (showers are fine)
- Practice good hygiene: wipe from front to back after urinating or BM, change your pad regularly, wash your hands before using toilet
- Take your temperature when your water breaks and then every 4 hours. Let us know if it is above 100.7 F.

On rare occasions, the baby's umbilical cord slips down into the vagina when the water breaks and you may be able to see or feel the cord. The cord is at risk of being pinched by baby's head or butt and oxygen to the baby being cut off. This is most likely to happen when the baby's head is not firmly in the pelvis or the baby is in a breech position. This is a **PROLAPSED CORD** and a **TRUE EMERGENCY**, requiring immediate transport to the hospital and usually a cesarean section. **IMMEDIATELY** take the following steps:

- Get onto your hands and knees, then drop your chest to the floor/bed. This position uses gravity to keep the baby off the cord. **REMAIN IN THIS POSITION** at all times.
- Call 911. Tell them you have a prolapsed cord. Give your address and location in the house. Wait for them to lift you off the floor/bed and put you on the stretcher, always with your bottom in the air and chest on floor.
- Call your midwife as soon as possible after 911.