



WATER BREAKING ... HOW DO I KNOW?

Many women never experience their water breaking (also called Spontaneous Rupture of Membranes, or SRM) *before* going into labor, however, it does often happen. If you experience a sensation of wetness and are unsure of what it was, I hope that this chart will be of some help. When in doubt, call your midwife, doctor, and doula.

	Amniotic Fluid	Urine	Vaginal Discharge
Color	Usually clear or pink. If brown, port wine (reddish) or green, indicating presence of Meconium or blood, go to hospital immediately.	bright or pale yellow	Clear, Pink, White, creamy yellow
Smell of the fluid	"Thick" smell, earthy, mildly sweet like the ocean or saline	Ammonia type of smell	Mostly odorless, if it smells bad, you may have an infection, call your provider to set up an appointment for testing
How does it come out?	May come out suddenly, and will continue to come out despite your position. It will come out even if you do Kegel exercises.	Will not come out if Kegel is held tight. More likely to occur if stressed or after sneezing, coughing, etc.	Comes out after just getting up from a sitting or lying down position.
Frequency	Once sac has released, amniotic fluid will continue to drip out every few minutes until the baby is born. Regular trickles or gushes are a good indicator of ruptured membranes. Fluid will leak out during a contraction, even a mild one.	Usually only comes out once and then stops.	Usually only comes out once, most likely in the morning. Small gushes of fluid may also come out after bathing, swimming or sex.

Put nothing in the vagina if the membranes have ruptured! You may take a shower and if using the toilet, wipe front to back and if possible, rinse with sterile (water that has been boiled then cooled) water in a squeeze bottle. Taking Vitamin C and E may help protect against infection. Consult your provider about baths. Studies have proven that bathwater does not enter the vagina after the waters have broken and therefore there is no increased infection rate, but your provider may have protocols against it.

Jennifer A. McFarland, My Birth By Design, <http://www.mybirthbydesign.com/>, Jennifer@MyBirthByDesign.com, For educational purposes only. Please consult your healthcare provider with any questions. Do not reproduce for profit. Originally saw similar table on BEST doula services, Tracy Hartley, but have added to that chart and verified her findings with other sources. http://my.webmd.com/hw/health_guide_atoz/hw195832.asp?navbar=hw197816, <http://www.moondragon.org/mdbsguidelines/prom2.html>, <http://www.naturalchildbirth.org/natural/resources/labor/labor11.htm>