Premature Rupture of the Membranes (PROM)

Premature rupture of the membranes (PROM) is the early leaking of fluid from the membrane (sac) around the baby. This leaking of fluid may be a gush or trickle. The fluid comes out of your cervix (opening to the uterus) and down your vagina. The leaking may come and go. You cannot stop or control the fluid.

If you have leaking from your vagina, call your health care provider immediately. Your health care provider will explain the possible problems and will encourage you to participate in the decision about your treatment.

Treatment of PROM will depend on the age and health of your baby. You may deliver the baby early or your health care provider may try to delay your delivery so the baby's lungs can mature.

What could happen if PROM occurs?

- There is a high chance of labor starting within the first few days after the bag ruptures.
- There is a greater risk of infection. Germs, normally in the vagina, can now get into the fluid sac.
- There is a higher risk of cord prolapse, which is when the umbilical cord slips into the birth canal before the baby. Cord prolapse can happen especially if the baby is breech (bottom instead of head first). This is an emergency situation. Call your health care provider right away.

More on next page ➔

Learn more about your health care.
Sometimes the baby presses on the umbilical cord. This can slow the flow of oxygen to the baby in some cases.

What is done when PROM occurs?

Mother’s Health

- Your health care provider may admit you to the hospital for several days. This will allow your health care team to watch you and your baby's health closely. You will be checked for signs and symptoms of labor and infection. This includes checking your:
  - Temperature every 2 to 4 hours.
  - Uterus for tenderness
  - Vaginal discharge for amount, color, and smell
  - Blood for increased white blood cell count. A high white blood cell count can mean there is an infection.

Baby's health

- You will be taught how to check your baby's movements. The number of times your baby moves during a 30 minute period is a sign of how well your baby is doing. This will need to be done at least two times a day in the morning and evening. Read the instruction sheet on Fetal Movement Count.
- Because of the risk of cord prolapse and infection, a fetal monitor may be placed on your abdomen. The monitor will record the baby's heart rate and your contractions. Monitoring will be done at least once a day for an hour.

Be a Partner in Your Care

Even if you are not admitted to the hospital, you may need to do these things at home.

- To help meet your emotional needs:
  - Ask the nursing staff for suggestions on how to pass the time while you are resting.
- Plan for more time with family and friends.
- Think of activities you can do while resting in bed.
- Ask the nurse for the handout, *Pregnancy Activity Levels*.

**To help meet your physical needs:**
- Lay down with your feet up higher than your head. This helps prevent fluids from leaking and the umbilical cord from prolapsing. Stay in bed so you do not deliver the baby too early.
- Keep your vaginal area clean to prevent infection. The nurses will show you how to use a water bottle after you go the bathroom.
- Tell the nurse right away if you notice any change such as:
  - Increase in the amount of fluid leaking from your vagina
  - Increase in your temperature
  - Foul smelling drainage from your vagina

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.