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How do you know if your water is about to break

Share on PinterestOne of the most common phone calls we get at the labor and delivery unit where I work goes a little something like this:Riing,riing. "Birth center, this is Channie speaking, how can I help you?"Um, yes, hi. I'm so-and-so, and my due date is a few days away, but I think my water just broke, but I'm not sure ... should I come in?"As your big day approaches, it can be hard to know when it's "time." And even more confusing to a lot of women whose water doesn't gush dramatically like they show in the movies is trying to figure out whether or not their water has actually broken. To help you get prepared for what to expect, here are a few facts about your water breaking, along with some questions to ask yourself. 1. You can't be assessed over the phone. As I said, labor and delivery units get a lot of phone calls from anxious mommas-to-be, wondering if they should come because they're unsure if their water has really broken. As much as we would love to be able to magically tell if your water has broken without seeing you, it's just not safe for us to try to assess that over the phone because, really, it's impossible. If you're really questioning if your water has broken, the safest bet is just to head into the hospital to be evaluated or call up your OB — they may be better able to help guide you on what to do. The floor nurses simply can't make that call over the phone. 2. Try standing up. One trick to try to tell if your water has really broken is to do the "stand up" test. If you stand up and notice that the fluid seems to leak more once you're up, it's probably a good indicator that your water has broken, as the extra pressure from standing up can force the amniotic fluid out more than when you're just sitting.3. Is it mucus? I would guess that in almost half of the cases what women think is their water breaking is just mucus. As delivery gets closer during the last few weeks of pregnancy the cervix softens and women may lose their mucus plug in smaller amounts. Many times the mucus can increase quite a bit in the last couple weeks, even requiring a light sanitary pad. If your fluid is thicker or whiter (it may also have a twinge of blood here and there) in color, it might just be mucus. 4. Amniotic fluid is clear. Something that may help you be able to discern whether or not your water has broken is being aware of what the amniotic fluid (the technical term for your waters!) actually looks like. If your water has broken, it will be odorless and be clear in color.5. Your water can break in a gush, or leak slowly. I think a lot of women expect the giant gush of fluid that happens in the movies, and while that does happen sometimes, a lot of times a woman's water breaks a little more subtly. Imagine a big balloon full of water — you can prick it a few times with a pin and get a water leak, but it doesn't always necessarily burst. 6. Your nurse can tell if your water has broken. If you head to the hospital, convinced that your water has broken and you will shortly be holding your baby in your arms, only to be sent home in disappointment, rest assured that your nurse really can tell if your water has broken. There are several different ways that they can test to see if your water has broken. The most common way of finding out is by looking at your amniotic fluid on a slide under a microscope, where it will take on a distinctive "ferning" pattern, like rows of tiny fern leaves. If all of that seems to check out, your water did break, and it really is amniotic fluid. 7. Labor usually kicks in after your water breaks. Thankfully - so you're not sitting around all day wondering "was that really my water breaking?" - labor tends to kick in pretty quickly (and intensely) after your water breaks. You might not have much time to question if it was "real" or not when the contractions start ...8. It is possible for a water leak to seal back up. It's rare, but it does happen. If you think of that balloon analogy again, imagine just a tiny pin-prick in the water balloon, with a tiny water leak. Incredibly, in some cases, that tiny leak can seal itself back up. Even if you are sure your water broke, it is possible that the leak may seal itself back up before you get to the hospital to get checked out. Talk about frustrating! 9. Some women's waters never break. If you're sitting around, waiting for labor to start with the dramatic gush of your water breaking, you may be disappointed. Some women's water never breaks until they are well progressed into labor, or even moments before the baby is actually delivered. I am actually one of those women — my water has never actually broken on its own!Disclaimer: This advice should not replace an actual phone call or visit to your medical care provider if you do in fact suspect that your water has broken. It is simply to ensure you have additional information when you go into the discussion with your nurses and doctors. A: Water breaking is a normal part of going into labor, but if it happens before your baby's ready to be born, the condition is called premature rupture of the membranes (PROM), which affects up to 10 percent of pregnant women. The main symptom is fluid that may either trickle or gush from your vagina. If this happens before 37 weeks, it's called preterm PROM; this occurs in up to 3 percent of pregnancies. Having PROM or preterm PROM can lead to complications and may cause you to go on bed rest, but it doesn't necessarily mean your baby will be born right away. The biggest risk from PROM is infection, since amniotic fluid prevents bacteria and other germs from infecting your baby. Once those membranes are broken, your baby is more vulnerable, and so your doctor will most likely have you go to the hospital where he or she can check you out and decide what to do next. If you're near your due date (more than 34 weeks) you might go into labor on your own, or your doctor might decide to induce labor to minimize the risk of infection. Babies this age are usually born totally fine without any complications. If your water breaks before 34 weeks, your doctor will probably give you antibiotics to fend off potential infections, plus steroids to help your baby's lungs develop. You may have to stay in the hospital to be monitored for signs of labor. Once you reach 34 weeks, your doctor will check to see that your baby's lungs are mature, and if they are, your baby will most likely be delivered then. Although the causes of PROM aren't fully understood, certain women are more at risk, like those who smoke, are pregnant with twins or multiples, or have conditions like high blood pressure. Seeing your doctor regularly can help your doctor spot and treat issues that may increase your risk. Answered by Parents.com Team You've spent the money (cleansers, toners, tonics), you've put in the time (religious washing, pin-point precise spot treatments), and yet those blemishes just won't budge. Our friends at YouBeauty investigate a surprising cause of acne. But before you throw your hands up in hopelessness, we're going to suggest something you might not have thought of before—something so banal and necessary to your everyday existence, you wouldn't dare question its credibility. Water. MORE: How Much Water Do You Really Need? That's right. With over 85 percent of all water in the U.S. being hard, most American homes have to face the cold, hard truth: We're covered in soap scum. And that soap scum is clogging our pores and contributing to breakouts. The problem with hard water is that its high mineral content prevents it from properly reacting with soap and, instead of triggering a lather, it creates a soapy layer on the skin. This not only clogs pores, but also irritates the skin, making it itchy, flaky and dry. "These impurities in water make it difficult for soap and shampoo to wash off, leading to dryness of the skin and scalp, which directly irritate skin and cause redness and rosacea," says Dr. Dennis Gross, Manhattan dermatologist and founder of the Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare product line. There's also a correlation between hard water and skin disorders, like eczema. "The minerals, such as calcium, that are found in higher concentration may cause loss of moisture in the skin, which can lead to irritating conditions, such as eczema," says New York dermatologist Dr. Eric Schweiger. Research at the University of Nottingham found that, out of over 7,500 school-age children, eczema was significantly more common for those living in hard water areas than those living in soft water areas. It's not just a matter of converting hard water to soft, which can be achieved with an at-home filtration system, because this does not take care of the heavy metals—like iron, zinc, magnesium, copper and lead—that cause skin issues. "An at-home filtration system is not an effective means of safeguarding the skin because the heavy metals are microscopic and present in the actual solution of the water," says Dr. Gross. QUIZ: How Healthy is Your Skin? So what are these heavy metals actually doing to our skin? According to Dr. Gross, the impurities cause a chemical reaction with the skin's natural oils, changing the consistency of the oil from a liquid to a wax, which in turn, clogs the pores and leads to acne. They have the same response to creams, even those that are non-comedogenic. "After the face is washed and dried, the impurities from water still remain on the face and cling to the skin," says Dr. Gross. "Even though these creams are formulated with oil-like substances specifically created to not block pores, when the creams come in contact with water impurities left on the face (after it has been washed and patted dry), the remaining impurities cause the oil-like substances to clog the pores." Also, the impurities found in tap water can act as free radicals, which bond with healthy skin cells and then destroy them. This in turn leads to the breakdown of collagen and leads to the formation of fine lines and wrinkles. MORE: Your Guide to Acne But for something touted as causing so many skin issues, it doesn't seem to have caught on with a majority of well-known skin specialists. Many state that, at worst, hard water makes skin drier. "In most patients, it would be helpful to switch from hard to soft water, but not necessary," says Dr. Schweiger. "If patients use gentle cleansers and wash carefully, applying a moisturizer after washing, most patients will be able to tolerate any type of water."

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