

Treatment strategies

for women whose water breaks prematurely

Numbers for pregnant women whose water broke at term without the onset of labor (premature rupture). Women delivered either immediately (labor was induced) or were monitored closely while waiting until labor occurred spontaneously (expectant management).

| | 100 women with expectant management | 100 women with induced labor |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Benefits | | |
| How many women developed an infection of the uterine lining and/or the membranes surrounding the baby? | 11 | 5 |
| How many babies developed an early-onset blood infection (neonatal sepsis)? | about 2 in each group | |
| How many babies received antibiotics after birth? | 13 | 8 |
| How many babies were admitted to the special or intensive care unit after birth? | 16 | 12 |
| Harms | | |
| How many had a cesarean section? | about 15 in each group | |
| How many babies died before or up to 28 days after birth? | less than 1 in each group* | |

*Severe damage is very rare (2 instances in every 1,000 births).

Short summary: Induced labor reduced the number of infections of the uterine lining in 6 out of every 100 women. The number of admissions of newborns to a special or intensive care was reduced by 4 out of 100. There was no difference in the number of caesarean sections.

Source: Middleton et al. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2017(1):CD005302.