

(RE)BIRTHING COLLECTIVE

Doula Services, Childbirth Education & Prenatal Yoga

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Nutrition for Your Bag of Waters

There are five things you should be eating to help strengthen and preserve your amniotic sac. Why is maintaining your bag of waters so important? Here are a few reasons:

1. It's easier for your baby to move and rotate if suspended in water. By the time your baby is ready to be born, it is quite snug in the womb. As the baby enters the pelvis and makes its way down the birth canal, it needs to do a fair amount of moving and turning. It is much easier for the baby to do this if it is suspended in and buffered by water, rather than being directly squeezed by the uterus. Malpositioned babies are also more easily turned when the bag of waters is in tact (and correcting a malposition helps shorten and de-intensify labors).
2. There is less risk of infection if the bag of waters is in tact. Once the bag of waters has been broken, any time something is inserted into the vagina, there is a risk of introducing bacteria which may cause an infection in both the mother and the baby. Babies, whose immune systems are not as developed as adults', can get very sick and even die from an infection. Additionally, if it is suspected that your baby has an infection, it will be separated from you at birth, which may delay bonding.

If you are GBS+ (Group B Strep positive), your care providers will almost certainly want to put you on antibiotics during your labor. Being on antibiotics means being hooked up to an IV, which may inhibit you from moving freely in labor. You may want to ask your care provider about starting the antibiotics only **AFTER** your bag of waters has broken. The longer your bag of waters is in tact, the longer you may be able to delay being put on an IV.

3. If a baby is still in the amniotic sac, the sac, rather than the baby's head, will press down on and dilate your cervix. This may help you dilate faster and more effectively (as the extra padding from your bag of waters makes your baby's head "bigger"). It may also help reduce the impact of your baby's head on your cervix (which can be significant in an induced or augmented labor).

5 ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

1. Protein - to ensure that you're getting enough protein in your diet, make sure that every time you eat something you include a little protein.
2. Probiotics - you can get some probiotics from foods like yogurt, but look into taking them in pill or capsule form. The ones that don't need to be refrigerated are best, since they are easily transportable and you will be more inclined to take them if you can stuff them in your purse! Some prenatal vitamins also contain probiotics, so check the label.
3. Vitamin C with bioflavonoids - vitamin C is found in most fruits, but try to take this as a vitamin or supplement
4. Calcium - multi-vitamins and prenatal vitamins often do not contain enough calcium or magnesium. Try a supplement and make sure you sneak a serving of dairy into at least two or three of your meals/snacks.
5. Iron - iron can most likely be found in your prenatal vitamins, and your care provider may even have you on a separate supplement. However, if you find yourself becoming constipated, see if you can cut back on the supplement/vitamin and get enough from foods.

Nutrient	Examples
Protein	any meat, fish, eggs, cottage cheese, milk, quinoa, tofu, lentils, miso, green peas, peanut butter, soy, nuts, rice, whole-wheat bread
Probiotics	vitamins/supplements; yogurt, miso, pickled foods
Vitamin C	vitamins/supplements; fruits and vegetables
Calcium	vitamins/supplements; calcium-fortified foods, dairy, broccoli, kale, okra, turnips, spinach, kombu, wakame, nori, blackstrap molasses
Iron	vitamins/supplements; shellfish, meat, quinoa, tofu, soybeans, beans, prune juice, spinach, potatoes, figs, raisins, pumpkin, green beans, broccoli