

## Membrane sweeps (page 1 of 2)

The cervix (neck of the womb) must soften, shorten and open for labour to start; this is known as cervical effacement or cervical ripening. When you reach 40 weeks of pregnancy your midwife will offer you a vaginal examination to assess your cervix. Your midwife will give you a score out of 10 (known as a Bishop's score) which looks at softness, position, length, how open and how deep your baby's head is in the pelvis.

If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: [customer care@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:customer care@salisbury.nhs.uk)

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: [www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily](http://www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily) or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

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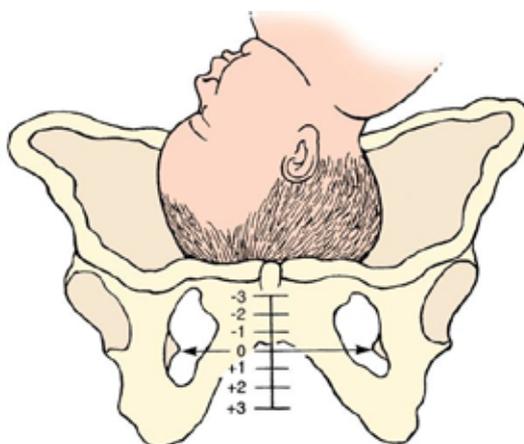
**BISHOP SCORE**

EXT.GENITALIA: \_\_\_\_\_ ABDO.PALPATION: \_\_\_\_\_ /5<sup>th</sup> PALPABLE

	0	1	2
POSITION OF CERVIX IN PELVIS	Posterior	Mid	Anterior
LENGTH OF CERVIX	Long 2cms	1cm	Effaced
CONSISTENCY OF CERVIX	Firm	Soft Not Stretchable	Soft Stretchable
CERVICAL DILATATION	0-1	1-2	2
PRESENTING PART IN RELATION TO SPINES	-3 Above	+2 Above	+1 Above Or Less
F.H _____ contractions			/10
DATE _____ TIME _____ SIGN _____			

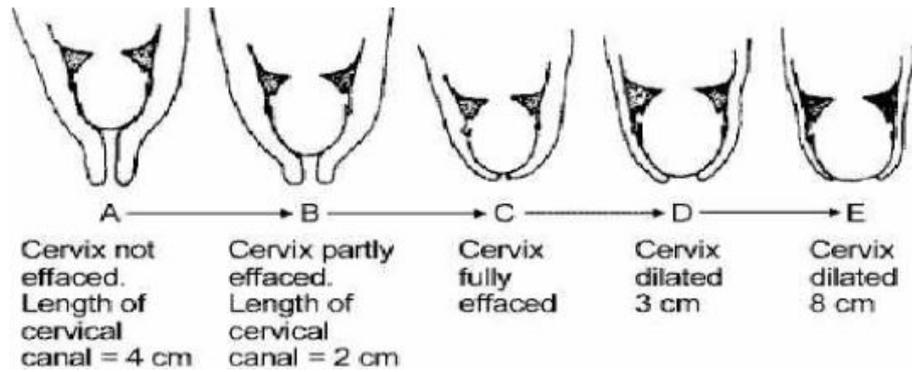
Sticker used in Salisbury

Effacement (ripening) of cervix



A cervix is favourable if the score is greater than 7. Most women, particularly those on their first baby, could have a score of 1 or 2, or even 0, so don't be disheartened if you have a lower score. It is your body's job to keep your cervix closed until your baby decides he/she is ready to be born.

During this assessment your midwife can offer you a membrane sweep which involves putting a finger through the cervix and sweeping in a circular motion. National guidance recommends that you are offered a sweep to reduce the need for induction of labour, though it isn't always successful.



Presenting part in relation to the pelvis

It may be important for you to know how soft your cervix is or you may wish to let nature take its course and decline a sweep. Membrane sweeps have shown to be safe in that they do not increase chances of waters breaking, infection or fetal distress, however some women may find a sweep painful and you may experience some period-like pains or bleeding afterwards. Having more sweeps does not increase your chance of going into labour sooner, though your midwife can repeat a sweep one week later.

If you would like advice please ring the Labour Ward at any time on 01722 425183 or 01722 425188.