

17P for Preventing Preterm Birth

What is 17P?

17P is a type of **progesterone** [proh-JES-tuh-rohn] treatment. Progesterone is a hormone that is made by the placenta during pregnancy. 17P is prescribed by a healthcare provider to help prevent early delivery (**preterm birth**).

Why is it so important to prevent preterm birth?

A baby born too early (a **preemie**) will be:

- **Smaller than normal and may have organs that aren't completely developed.** This can cause problems with breathing and feeding.
- **More likely to have infections, brain problems, and other serious health problems.** A very small or sick preemie may have long-lasting physical or learning problems or, despite the best medical care, may die.

Preemies who are able to stay in the womb until closer to the due date have a chance for good health at birth and throughout life. Preemies nearly always require advanced medical care in a newborn intensive care unit (NICU).

Why was I offered 17P treatment?

Your healthcare provider may have recommended 17P because you:

- **Are carrying only one baby in this pregnancy** (a singleton pregnancy)
- AND
- **Have already had at least one preterm singleton birth**



Preterm birth means a birth before 37 weeks of pregnancy. Preterm birth may be dangerous for the baby's health.

Studies have shown that 17P treatment in the second trimester of pregnancy can lower the risk of preterm birth for women who have had one before. Other pregnant women, however, may not need or benefit from taking this medicine.

Is 17P safe?

Experts believe that 17P is safe for mothers and babies when given in the second and third trimesters of pregnancy. In fact, the nation's leading group of pregnancy experts, the American Council of Obstetrics and Gynecology, approves and recommends the use of 17P to prevent having a preterm birth again. Follow-up studies of children born to mothers treated with 17P showed no health problems from the treatment.



How is 17P given?

- The 17P medicine is given in a once-a-week shot (injection).
- Weekly injections usually begin in the 16th to 20th week of pregnancy, though they may start later. They should continue through the 36th week of pregnancy.
- Each injection must be given into a muscle. Most women choose to have the injection in the muscles of the buttocks or thigh.
- You can get a weekly injection at your healthcare provider's office or at home. (At home, you can inject yourself or have someone do it for you.) Talk to your healthcare provider about what will work best for you.

Will I have side effects from 17P?

Most women report no side effects, other than mild soreness and swelling where they get the shot. If you have soreness, you can ease it by sitting in a warm tub or taking acetaminophen (Tylenol). Check with your healthcare provider before taking any other medicine.

When should I call my doctor?

Like any pregnant woman, you should call your healthcare provider if you have:

- Contractions that come every 15 minutes or less even if they're not always painful
- Cramping (like menstrual cramps) that's either constant or on and off and comes with diarrhea
- Low, dull backache that's constant or on and off
- Pressure in your pelvis, groin, or thighs that doesn't get better with rest
- Bleeding or spotting
- A change in vaginal discharge (a sudden increase in discharge or discharge that is suddenly watery or full of mucus)
- A gush or leak of fluid from your vagina
- A feeling that your uterus is either "knotting up" or tightening or that the baby is balling up inside
- Headaches that are constant or severe
- Sudden swelling in your face or hands
- Pain in the upper right part of your tummy
- Blurred vision or spots in front of your eyes
- Sudden weight gain (more than 1 pound in a day)
- Decreased or no movement of your baby
- A feeling that something just isn't right

Instructions for taking 17P

When to have 17P injections (write in dates):

Injection instructions (if taking injections at home):

Amount to inject: _____ Where to inject: _____

Other instructions: _____

If I miss an injection: _____

If I have questions about this medicine, I can call: _____ **Phone:** _____

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