

Preterm Birth Risk Worksheet

If you have delivered a baby too early your healthcare provider will complete this worksheet with you to help you better understand why this happened, your chances for having another preterm birth, and what to do to help prevent it.



What is a preterm birth?

A **preterm birth** is when a woman gives birth too early—before 37 weeks of pregnancy. Preterm births fall into 2 groups:

- 1 Medically indicated preterm birth.** This is a delivery that's recommended and begun by your doctor. A doctor will suggest an early delivery if either baby or mother has a health condition that makes continuing the pregnancy dangerous.
- 2 Spontaneous preterm birth.** This happens when a woman goes into preterm labor or when her water breaks too early—called **premature rupture of membranes**, or **PROM**. Once preterm labor is advanced or the membranes have ruptured, an early birth will usually happen.

For preterm babies (**preemies**), their organs and systems may not be completely developed or working well, or not completely ready for the outside world. Because of this, preemies have a greater chance of having health problems. The earlier in pregnancy a baby is born, the higher the risk of having problems.

Note: To understand the possible reasons that led to your preterm delivery, go through the next section of this worksheet with your healthcare provider and keep a record of this information.

About your own preterm delivery

Your preterm delivery happened at ____ weeks of pregnancy. (Your due date was set for 40 weeks of pregnancy.)

The preterm birth happened because:

- Your cervix opened too early
- You went into labor too early
- Your water broke too early
- Your doctor recommended preterm birth because of a:
 - Problem with the pregnancy:

 - Medical problem you had:

 - Condition your baby had or a concern your doctor had about your baby:

- Other: _____

What are my chances of having another preterm delivery?

Your chance of delivering early in your next pregnancy is approximately: ____%

Note: This figure is based on studies of women who have delivered prematurely in a situation similar to yours. It estimates your risk but can't predict your future. Every person and every pregnancy is unique.

Your prevention plan



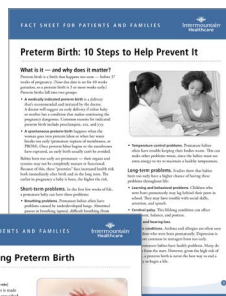
What can I do to lower my risk of having another preterm birth?

We suggest these steps (your healthcare provider will check all that apply to you):

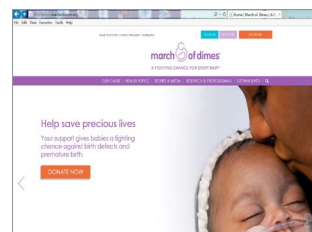
- Wait 18 months before considering another pregnancy.** To ensure this spacing, use a highly effective birth control such as an intrauterine device (IUD) or implant.
- Have an imaging test to check for a problem with your uterus.** Name of the test: _____
- Have a blood test to check for health conditions that may affect you and your pregnancies.** Name of the recommended test(s): _____
- Start medicine by the 16th week of your next pregnancy.** Your doctor will prescribe weekly injections of 17P—a treatment with the hormone progesterone. For some women with a prior preterm birth, 17P treatment lowers the risk of having one again.
- Have your cervical length measured by your healthcare provider during your next pregnancy.** Cervical shortening early in pregnancy can be a warning sign of preterm labor.
- Have a cervical cerclage [SUR-klahzh] in your next pregnancy.** This is a procedure to stitch your cervix closed. Studies have shown that for some women with a history of preterm delivery, cerclage helps prevent premature birth.
- Take low-dose (81 mg) aspirin every day before—or early in—your next pregnancy.**
- Take medicine to help lower your blood pressure.**
- Meet with your doctor before your next pregnancy** to discuss ways to reduce your risk of delivering early again.
- Other actions:** _____

For more advice and information, ask your healthcare provider for these Intermountain fact sheets:

- **Preterm Birth: 10 Steps to Help Prevent It**
- **17P for Preventing Preterm Birth**



Also visit the official website for the March of Dimes. The March of Dimes is an international, nonprofit organization dedicated to helping women have full-term pregnancies and researching the problems that threaten the health of babies: marchofdimes.com



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