

# What is a Cervical Length Measurement and why do I need it?

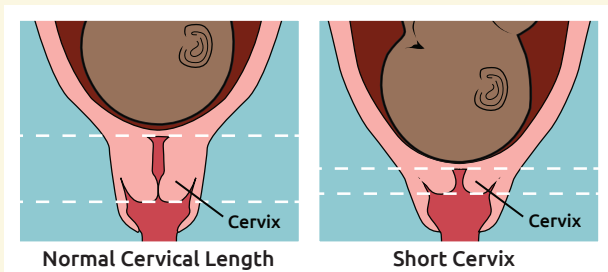


## Q What is it?

A A cervical length measurement is a vaginal ultrasound that measures the thickness of your cervix.

## Q Why is it done?

A The ultrasound checks your risk of premature delivery. Women who have a shortened cervix are at a higher risk of delivering a premature baby.



## Q When is it done?

A The ultrasound is done between 18-24 weeks of pregnancy when you have your scheduled ultrasound to check on how your baby is developing. It may be done sooner if you have had a premature baby in the past.

## Q How is the ultrasound done?

A After going to the bathroom and emptying your bladder:

- You lie down on the exam table with your knees bent and your feet up in foot rests.
- A probe called a transducer, with gel on it, is placed in your vagina. Most women do not have any pain, but you may feel some minor pressure from the probe.
- The probe then sends out sound waves to the ultrasound machine to form a picture that measures the thickness of your cervix.

## Q What do the results mean?

A After your ultrasound has been performed, your doctor, midwife or nurse will go over your results with you. If you are at an increased risk for premature delivery, your health care provider may recommend more ultrasounds and a medication called progesterone. Progesterone is a hormone made by women's bodies that increases during pregnancy. Progesterone treatments can help reduce the chance of premature delivery for women who do not produce enough of the hormone.

## Q Is the ultrasound covered by insurance?

A Check with your doctor, midwife, nurse or your insurance company about your coverage prior to your scheduled ultrasound. (The diagnosis code used for this ultrasound is ICD10-Z36. The procedure code is 76817.)

## Q What are the signs of premature labor and when should I contact my doctor, midwife or nurse?

A Signs of premature labor are not the same for all women. Premature labor can begin suddenly and without warning, and the cause is not known. Call your doctor, midwife or nurse right away if any of these things happen:

- Contractions, with or without pain, 4-6 times per hour
- Low, dull backache
- Pressure between your legs or in your lower belly
- Diarrhea
- Vaginal spotting or bleeding
- Leaking fluid or bleeding from your vagina
- Watery, clear, pink or red vaginal discharge
- Cramping, in the lower abdomen or back, like your period is going to start
- Sharp pains, contractions or tightening of your abdomen
- Feeling the baby is "balling up"
- Feeling like something is not right



OBBO is a partner in CelebrateOne, a community-wide initiative to reduce infant mortality and help more babies celebrate their first birthdays. For more information and resources, visit [www.celebrateone.info](http://www.celebrateone.info) and [www.ohiobetterbirthoutcomes.org](http://www.ohiobetterbirthoutcomes.org).

Information provided courtesy of The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. Image adapted from National Institutes of Health.