

# What you need to know about premature delivery and future pregnancies

## How you can reduce your risk of a premature delivery



### What is a premature delivery?

A premature delivery is a delivery that occurs before 37 weeks of pregnancy.

### Why was my baby born prematurely?

Even if you do everything right, you can still have a baby that is born too early. One out of every 8 babies in the United States is born prematurely. There are certain risk factors that can increase a woman's chances of having a baby born early. Talk to your doctor, midwife or nurse about your risk factors before becoming pregnant again.

### Will my future babies be born prematurely?

Because your baby was born prematurely, you may be at a higher risk of delivering early again in your next pregnancy.

### Will I need special care during my next pregnancy?

Your doctor, midwife or nurse may recommend :

- You see a Maternal Fetal Medicine doctor. This type of doctor specializes in high-risk pregnancies.
- More frequent office visits, ultrasounds and monitoring of the baby during your pregnancy.
- Progesterone treatments. Progesterone is a hormone made by women's bodies that increases during pregnancy. Progesterone treatments can help reduce the chance of premature delivery by as much as 35 to 45%.

### How can I reduce my chances of another premature delivery?

Here are some tips to help you prevent premature delivery:

- One of the most important things you can do is to start prenatal care as soon as possible. Make an appointment to see a doctor, midwife or nurse when you become pregnant.
- Get treated for any chronic health conditions like diabetes, hypertension and thyroid problems.
- Exercise regularly and try to stay at a healthy weight.
- Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet.
- Avoid alcohol, drugs and tobacco.
- Protect yourself from infections by practicing safe sex.
- Try to reduce your stress level as much as possible.
- Wait 18-24 months before becoming pregnant again.
- Talk to a health care professional about starting prenatal vitamins if you are trying to get pregnant.



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).

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