



**Give your baby  
a healthy start.**

Take the  
right steps  
to prevent  
premature birth.



**Babies born before 37 weeks of pregnancy, more than three weeks early, are more likely to have serious health problems and stay in the hospital longer.**

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. If you are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant, ask a doctor, midwife or nurse about how progesterone can help you and your baby.



# Know your risks and how to reduce your chances of premature delivery.

## You are more likely to deliver early if you:

- Had a premature baby
- Have had a miscarriage
- Have a short cervix
- Have had surgery on your cervix
- Are African American/Black
- Are pregnant with more than one baby (twins, triplets)
- Used fertility drugs to help get pregnant
- Have a history of sexually transmitted infections
- Were very overweight or underweight before becoming pregnant
- Smoke, do drugs or abuse alcohol
- Have a poor diet
- Have too much stress
- Have gum disease

## To decrease your chances of a premature birth:

- Stop smoking
- Avoid alcohol and drugs
- Visit a doctor, midwife or nurse at the start of your pregnancy and regularly while pregnant
- Know your risk for premature birth
- Know the warning signs of premature labor
- Talk to your doctor, midwife or nurse about progesterone if you have had a premature baby, a miscarriage after 16 weeks of pregnancy or have a short cervix

## Know the warning signs of premature labor:

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 Perinatal Quality Collaborative.