

PREMATURE BIRTH OVERVIEW

15 Million Babies Are Born Prematurely Each Year

African American Women Experience the Highest Rate of Prematurity

A birth taking place more than three weeks before the due date is considered a premature birth. Due to the baby having less time to develop in utero, complications can occur with premature births.

How can premature births be prevented? What can a patient expect with prematurity? Please read the following guide to find the answers to these questions.

01 | Definition

Premature birth takes place before the start of the 37th week of pregnancy; whereas a normal pregnancy lasts approximately 40 weeks. There are different levels of preterm, or premature birth:

- Late preterm – 34-36 weeks of pregnancy
- Moderately preterm – 32-34 weeks of pregnancy
- Very preterm – less than 32 weeks of pregnancy
- Extremely preterm – at or before 25 weeks of pregnancy

02 | Risk Factors

Although the cause of prematurity cannot always be determined, there are factors that increase your risk for premature birth, including:

- Previous premature birth
- Less than six months between pregnancies
- Multiple births (twins, triplets, etc.)
- Conception through in vitro fertilization
- Tobacco or drug use during pregnancy
- Hypertension and/or diabetes
- Stress during pregnancy
- Previous miscarriage or abortion
- Physical injury/trauma during pregnancy
- Poor nutrition, being overweight or underweight before and during pregnancy
- Certain infections, such as infection of the amniotic fluid and lower genital tract

03 | Complications

The more premature the baby is, the more complications it is likely to experience. Complications of premature birth may include:

- Respiratory problems
- Hypotension and PDA (patent ductus arteriosus)
- Bleeding in the brain
- Hypothermia
- Gastrointestinal problems, including NEC (necrotizing enterocolitis)
- Anemia and Jaundice
- Hypoglycemia
- Immune system problems

Long-term complications may also occur. To learn more about premature birth and potential long-term complications, please visit:

<http://www.marchofdimess.org/complications/long-term-health-effects-of-premature-birth.aspx>

***Did You Know?**
1 in 8 babies are born
prematurely in the U.S.*

References

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/premature-birth/basics/definition/con-20020050>

<http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/pretermbirth.htm>

<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/83/13/78/831378509e19b3f70d812b6e41499385.jpg>