

## PREVIOUS PRETERM BIRTH

I've heard of 17P, but I don't know much about it. How could it help me and my baby?



If you're pregnant and have had a preterm birth before, your doctor may want you to have shots called 17P, or 17 alpha-hydroxyprogesterone caproate.

**Preterm birth** is when your baby is born too early. Preterm birth means your baby is born before 37 weeks of pregnancy or more than three weeks early.

**Preterm labor** is labor that begins before week 37 of pregnancy.

**Full term** means your baby is born after 39 weeks and before 41 weeks of pregnancy.

If you've had a preterm birth before and are pregnant again, you may be at risk of having another preterm birth.

### How do I know if I'm at risk for having another preterm birth?

**TRUE OR FALSE** My past preterm birth was spontaneous, meaning my labor began on its own without drugs or other ways of inducing.

**TRUE OR FALSE** The sac around my baby broke early causing me to go into preterm labor.

**TRUE OR FALSE** I had a preterm birth before, and am only pregnant with one baby now. I am not pregnant with twins, triplets or more.

If you answered "true" to any of these, you are at risk of having another preterm birth.

### What does preterm birth mean for my baby?

Babies who are born early may have to stay in the hospital for a long time. They may also have:

- More health problems than full term babies
- An underdeveloped brain and/or brain damage

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- A need to be in a special care nursery, called neonatal intensive care
- Asthma
- Vision problems

Prematurity is also a leading cause of infant death.

Even babies born between 37 and 39 weeks may have trouble with feeding, breathing problems and jaundice. **An extra week or two in the womb can make all the difference for your baby.**

### How can I protect my baby from being born too soon?

Progesterone (pronounced *proh-JES-tuh-rohn*) is a hormone made in your body when you're pregnant. Early in your pregnancy, progesterone helps your uterus grow and keeps it from having contractions. For some women, extra progesterone can help prevent another preterm birth.

If you are at risk of having another preterm birth, your provider may recommend progesterone shots called 17P. Getting regular shots of 17P can lower your chances of having another preterm birth by one-third.



Talk with your doctor about 17P. If you both decide the 17P treatment is best for you, your doctor will want to begin your shots when you're between 16 and 24 weeks along. You will likely get a weekly shot until your 37th week of pregnancy.

### For the 17P treatment to work, it's important to get the shot each week.

What questions do you have about 17P? You can write them down here and take them with you to your next appointment.

1. Is 17P safe for me and my baby?
2. Does 17P have any side effects?
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

If you have questions about your health and your pregnancy anytime, you can call our 24-hour Nurse HelpLine at 1-888-596-0268 (TTY 711) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)

March of Dimes, [marchofdimes.org](http://marchofdimes.org)

NIH Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, [nichd.nih.gov](http://nichd.nih.gov)

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