

Preventing Premature Babies

In 2014, preterm birth affected about 1 of every 10 infants born in the United States. Preterm birth is the greatest contributor to infant death, with most preterm-related deaths occurring among babies who were born very preterm (before 32 weeks). Preterm birth is also a leading cause of long-term neurological disabilities in children. (source: CDC)

In the last five years in Southwest Florida, 5,137 babies were born prematurely.

There are many causes of premature births. It is a complex issue that we are still trying to understand. Each baby is very different. However, there are things a mother can do to reduce her risks:

Reduce your risks for a premature baby:

1. Quit smoking.
2. Avoid alcohol and illicit drugs.
3. Get prenatal care as soon as you think you may be pregnant and throughout your pregnancy.
4. Seek medical attention for any warning signs or symptoms of preterm labor.



Know your signs and symptoms of pre-term labor!

- Contractions (the abdomen tightens like a fist) every 10 minutes or more often.
- Change in vaginal discharge (leaking fluid or bleeding from the vagina).
- Pelvic pressure—the feeling that the baby is pushing down.
- Abdominal cramps with or without diarrhea.
- Cramps that feel like a menstrual period.
- Low, dull back-ache.

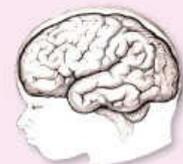
Give Your Baby 39 Weeks!

It's not healthy for your baby if you schedule a delivery or C-section before 39 weeks unless your provider says it is medically necessary. Many women request to schedule their deliveries for the convenience of their work or vacation schedules. It is important to let your baby come naturally if possible. At 35 weeks, your baby's brain is not fully developed. Just a few more weeks makes a big difference. (picture from the March of Dimes 39 Weeks initiative). To learn more about the importance of 39 weeks, please go to www.marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/why-at-least-39-weeks-is-best-for-your-baby.aspx.

A baby's brain at 35 weeks weighs only two-thirds of what it will weigh at 39 to 40 weeks.



35 weeks



39 to 40 weeks