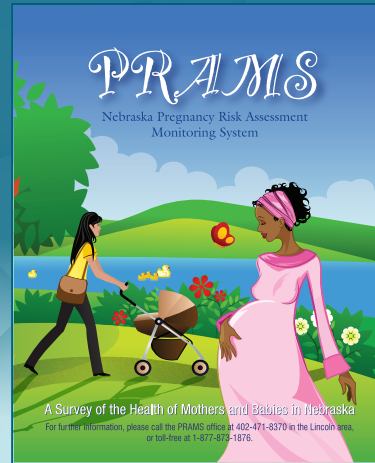


Risks for Preterm Birth

You are at risk for early delivery if you...

- Have had a previous preterm birth
- Are African American
- Smoke, use drugs or alcohol, or have a poor diet
- Are 35 or older
- Got pregnant less than 18 months after a prior pregnancy
- Have a chronic condition like obesity, diabetes, or hypertension
- Used fertility treatments to get pregnant
- Are experiencing social stress or depression



This fact sheet was developed by a work group of maternal child health stakeholders and supported by Nebraska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS). PRAMS is an ongoing population-based survey of mother's behavior and experiences before, during, and shortly after pregnancy.

PRAMS provides educational information about topics related to maternal and infant health, topics like oral health, breastfeeding, and safe sleep. PRAMS can also connect you to resources for your family's health.

Visit www.dhhs.ne.gov/PRAMS for more information and other resources for your family.

NEBRASKA

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DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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Preventing Preterm Birth

Reducing Preterm Births in Nebraska





What is Preterm Birth?

Preterm birth occurs when a baby is born before 37 weeks of pregnancy. It is the leading cause of serious health problems among infants in the United States.

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In 2018, 1 in 10 births in Nebraska were preterm.

Babies born too early are called preterm babies, or “preemies.” Preterm birth may lead to lifelong problems such as:

- Breathing problems
- Feeding difficulties
- Cerebral palsy
- Developmental delays
- Vision problems
- Hearing impairment

How to Lower Your Chances of a Preterm Birth

- Wait 18 months between pregnancies
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Eat a nutritious diet
- Get all medical conditions under control before you get pregnant—diabetes, hypertension, asthma, obesity, oral health, epilepsy
- Avoid contact with toxic substances like pesticides and chemicals
- Stop smoking, drinking alcohol, and using illegal substances
- If you’ve had a previous preterm birth, talk to your provider about how to manage your risk
- Attend prenatal care visits when you are pregnant
- Minimize the stress in your life

Steps to Help Your Baby Before They are Born

Protect your baby by...

- Talking to your provider about a full term delivery. Every week counts during pregnancy.
- Avoiding elective delivery before 39 weeks.
- Exploring services that may be available in your area to help you and your baby. Services like home visiting programs, or clinics that provide prenatal care for all women, regardless of ability to pay.
- Calling the Healthy Mothers, Health Babies hotline (2-1-1) or visit www.ne211.org to get connected to services that are available in your area.

When to Call the Doctor

Preterm labor begins suddenly and the cause is unknown. Like regular labor, signs of early labor are:

- Contractions or tightening in the abdomen every 10 minutes or more, even if not painful
- Pelvic pressure – feels like the baby is pressing down
- Low, dull backache
- Cramps that feel like a menstrual period
- Abdominal cramps with or without diarrhea
- Change in vaginal discharge
- Gush or leaking of fluid from your vagina
- Vaginal bleeding

Other illnesses to call your doctor

- Constant or severe headache
- Increase in swelling in face or hands
- Blurred vision or spots in front of your eyes
- Sudden weight gain more than one pound a day
- Decreased or no movement of your baby
- A feeling that something just isn't right

