

PREMATURITY

One in 8 babies is premature, and this is a growing problem. Information in this brochure will help you understand prematurity and identify steps you can take to reduce the chance of having another premature infant.

Premature babies are born very small or very early. Their bodies usually are not ready to be born. They can have trouble breathing, develop bleeding in their brains, have heart problems and are prone to getting infections, among other complications. Often they must stay at the hospital for months learning how to breathe, eat and maintain their body temperature. Many have lifelong problems.

We don't know the cause of more than half of premature births. We do know a mother can do everything right and still have a premature baby. We also know some health problems and behaviors put a mother at a higher risk of having a premature baby. Some of these are things you can change such as smoking or not getting enough exercise. Some you cannot change, including your age and your past medical history.



ONLINE RESOURCES

The American Academy of Pediatrics
aap.org

Wisconsin Tobacco Quitline
www.ctri.wisc.edu/quitline.html

March of Dimes
marchofdimes.com

**Public Health Information and Referral Services
for Women, Children and Families**
mch-hotlines.org

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
womenshealth.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
cdc.gov

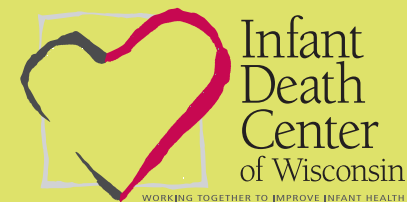
Use this space to write questions to ask your health care provider.



MS C630A, PO Box 1997, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1997
(414) 266-2743 • Fax (414) 266-3338 • idcw.org

*Developed by the Infant Death Center of Wisconsin.
Funding for this brochure provided by a grant from the March of Dimes.*

© 2009 Infant Death Center of Wisconsin. All rights reserved.
exacta 15k tcd 1209



Take
CONTROL
of Your Pregnancy
Reduce the risk of having
a premature baby



YOUR LIFESTYLE

Your health care provider needs to know about your health and lifestyle in order to best help you have a healthy pregnancy. He or she may ask you about these common risk factors linked with early births:

- A previous preterm birth.
- Smoking.
- Diabetes.
- High blood pressure.
- Illegal drug use.
- Drinking alcohol.
- Infections, including urinary or sexually transmitted.
- Over or underweight.
- High levels of stress.
- Abusive relationships (physical, sexual or emotional).
- Working long hours with standing for a long period of time.
- Exposure to harmful chemicals.
- Tooth and gum infections.
- Age – younger than 17 or older than 35.

Sometimes none of these things are factors and women still have premature babies. It is important to talk to your health care provider and work together to do what you can to reduce your risk of having another premature baby.

YOUR HEALTH

Your health before pregnancy makes a difference to the health of your baby.

- Eat fruits and vegetables every day as part of a healthy diet.
- Take a multivitamin with folic acid daily.
- Exercise. Walking, for example, can reduce stress and improve overall health.
- Take care of your teeth and gums.
- Stop smoking. There are programs to help you quit.
- Do not abuse alcohol or use illegal drugs. Talk to your doctor or health care professional for a referral for help.
- Lower your stress. Counseling may help you deal with problems.
- Give your body time to heal before becoming pregnant again. Talk to your doctor to find out how long you should wait between pregnancies. It should be at least 18 months to reduce your risk of having a premature baby.
- See your health care provider as soon as you know you are pregnant. Ask about the signs and symptoms of preterm labor.



COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community services to help you manage your health.

- Your health care provider.
- Your public health department.
- Your local hospital.
- Your local mental health association.