

Preventing Preterm Birth: Progesterone Treatment (17P) Important Information You Need to Know

What Is Preterm Birth?

Preterm birth is when a baby is born before 37 weeks of pregnancy, or more than three weeks early. Babies that are born too early can have health problems such as brain damage, asthma and problems with vision. Preterm birth is also the leading cause of infant death in North Carolina.

African-American babies are at a high risk of being born too early. The greatest risk for preterm birth is having had a prior preterm birth. Women who have already had a preterm birth have a 30-40% chance of having another baby born too early.



What Is 17P?

17P is a progesterone medicine for pregnant women who have already had a preterm birth. Progesterone is a hormone that a woman's body makes during pregnancy. Extra progesterone for some women can help to prevent preterm birth.

Who Should Get 17P?

Women should get 17P if they have already had a preterm birth of a single baby, if they are pregnant now and if they are carrying only one baby during this pregnancy.

How Well Does 17P Work?



There is no promise 17P will lead to a full-term pregnancy. 17P decreases a woman's chance of having another preterm birth. Studies show that 17P reduces the chance of another preterm birth for 33% of women who use it. Studies also show that 17P works for women of all races and ethnicities.

Even though a 33% lower chance might not seem like enough, it is the best choice right now. Nothing else

lowers the risk of repeat preterm birth as well as 17P. For babies, an extra week or two before birth can make a big difference.

How Long Has 17P Been Used?

There are several studies of 17P in women at risk for early birth. The first studies were done in the 1950s. At that time, doctors used 17P in early pregnancy. More studies were done in the 1990s and early 2000s. These studies show that 17P is helpful in later pregnancy.

The use of 17P is still not common and many people have not heard of it. This is because many people do not know about the new studies and because 17P can only be ordered from special pharmacies. Also, 17P is only used by a small number of special moms. For this reason, it is not being advertised on TV or in newspapers.

Is 17P Safe?



Studies show that 17P is safe. Studies also show that there are no serious side effects for the mother or the baby.

What Are the Side Effects of 17P?

Side effects are very rare. Some women report soreness, swelling, itching, or bruising at the site of the injection.

How Do Women Get the 17P Treatment?

Doctors and nurses will talk to women who can be helped by 17P. If the woman agrees to use 17P, she will get one shot each week. The shot is needed every week so there is a steady supply of 17P in the woman's body.

Women begin getting 17P shots between 16 and 20 weeks of pregnancy. The shots should be given until 37 weeks of pregnancy. After 37 weeks, it is safe for babies to be born.

What Are Women Who Have Used 17P Saying?

"I have an 11-year-old and a 6-year-old, and they were both premature. The second one had to stay in the hospital for at least a month and a half. I wanted to try 17P because I wanted to see how far I could go with my third."

—Konneshia, mother of Natavia (born on time)

"I would definitely talk to other moms who've had preemies about 17P. If you gain two more weeks in a pregnancy and you've already had a preemie, then you know how valuable two weeks can be. In a pregnancy, every day is important."

—Beatrice, mother of Garrison (born at 25 weeks)

What Can Women Do If They Are Still Nervous About Taking 17P?



It is okay to still have many questions about 17P. Doctors, midwives, and nurses can answer these questions. You can also go to www.mombaby.org for more answers.

What Else Can Women Do to Prevent a Preterm Birth?

While 17P can help lower the chance for another early birth, there are also other things that pregnant mothers can do.

- Go to all prenatal care appointments even if you feel fine.
- Avoid cigarette smoke. If you smoke, stop.
- Practice safe sex.
- Talk to your doctor about any drugs, medicines or herbal remedies you are taking.
- Talk to your doctor and boss about how much time you should take off work.
- Rest and relax whenever you can. Ask friends and family for help.

- Ask for help if you don't feel safe with your partner. Abuse often gets worse during pregnancy.
- Talk to your doctor if you feel burning or pain when you urinate. You may have an infection.

What Are the Signs of Preterm Labor?

It is important to know the signs of early labor, because 17P is not a promise that your baby won't come early. The signs of early labor are:

- Bleeding
- Feeling that the baby is balling up
- Contractions (your belly tightens like a fist) every 10 minutes or less
- Changes in vaginal discharge (leaking fluid)
- Pelvic pressure (feeling that your baby is pushing down)
- Low, dull backache
- Cramps that feel like your period
- Abdominal cramps with or without diarrhea
- Feeling that something is not right

Call your doctor, midwife or nurse right away if you have any of these signs.

Questions?

Contact your doctor at: _____

(Provider, please place your phone number here.)



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