

REDUCING PRETERM BIRTH

(Baby Born Before 37 Weeks)

What Black Women Need to Know

Preterm birth is the leading cause of death for babies in the U.S. under 1 year of age. In California, Black women—regardless of their socioeconomic status or education level—have a 52 percent higher risk of preterm birth than White women. Prematurity can cause short- and long-term problems for the baby, including breathing, hearing, vision, learning and other complications. The highest risk factor for preterm birth is a previous preterm birth.



10 Tips to Reduce Your Preterm Birth Risk:

1. Take a multi-vitamin with folic acid every day.
2. Wait 18 months after having a baby before your next pregnancy.
3. Go to the doctor as soon as you think you're pregnant.
4. Keep your doctor appointments, even if you feel fine.
5. Get treated for health conditions, like high blood pressure, diabetes and thyroid problems.
6. Get help in managing your stress. Worrying about societal problems, such as racism, may also be the kind of stress linked to preterm birth.
7. If you smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs, stop—ask your doctor about treatment programs.
8. Try to maintain a healthy weight by including fresh fruits and vegetables in your daily diet and staying active.
9. If you have had a previous premature birth, ask your doctor if progesterone shots or low-dose aspirin are a good idea.
10. Partner with your provider and discuss what is best for you and baby.

To find support in your area:

Visit Black Infant Health at cdph.ca.gov/BIH or call your community resource help hotline at 211.



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What Providers Need to Know

Preterm birth is the leading cause of death for babies in the U.S. under 1 year of age. In California, Black women—regardless of their socioeconomic status or education level—have a 52 percent higher risk of preterm birth than White women.¹ Prematurity can cause a range of problems for the baby, including breathing, hearing, vision, learning and other complications.



Who is Most at Risk for Preterm Birth?

- ▶ Women with a history of preterm birth²
- ▶ Women with short inter-pregnancy intervals or pregnancies closely spaced²
- ▶ Women who are under- and over-weight before pregnancy²

Preterm Birth Prevention Strategies:²

- ▶ Prescribe low-dose aspirin for women at risk for preeclampsia.
- ▶ Discuss the benefits of spacing pregnancies to greater than 18 months between delivery and next pregnancy.
- ▶ Provide 17P (*alpha-hydroxyprogesterone caproate*) for women with prior spontaneous preterm birth.
- ▶ Refer women who smoke to smoking cessation programs (*call CA Smokers Hotline @ 1-800-662-8887*).
- ▶ Provide vaginal progesterone or cerclage for a short cervix.
- ▶ Eliminate non-medically indicated deliveries prior to 39 weeks.
- ▶ Utilize assisted reproductive technology to minimize multiple births.
- ▶ Refer women to group prenatal care, where available.

Sources:

1. California Department of Public Health 2016 Birth Statistical Master File

2. www.marchofdimes.org

