



17P

*Risk Reduction
for Repeat
Preterm Birth*



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What is preterm birth?

Preterm birth is when a baby is born before 37 weeks of pregnancy, or more than three weeks early. Babies who 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.

Even “late preterm” babies (those born between 34 and 36 weeks gestation) are at increased risk for serious health problems compared with babies born full-term. Examples of health problems facing late preterm babies include: feeding difficulties, breathing problems, and jaundice. For babies, delaying a preterm birth by even one or two weeks can make a huge difference.

Who is at risk?

The greatest risk for preterm birth is having had a prior preterm birth. Women who have already had a premature baby need special attention when they are pregnant. African-American babies are also at high risk of being born too early, but premature birth affects babies of all races and ethnicities. One out of every eight babies in North Carolina is born too soon.



What is 17P?

It is natural for a mother to want to protect her baby.

Sometimes, a baby will be born early no matter what the mother and her health care providers do. But there is one thing some women can do to help increase their chances of having a full-term baby – 17P!

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

Talk to your health care provider about 17P if you have already had a preterm birth, if you are pregnant now, and if you are pregnant with only one baby.



17 Alpha Hydroxyprogesterone Caproate

How can you get 17P?

You should talk to your health care provider if you think 17P might help you. Even if he or she doesn't mention 17P, ASK!!

17P is a shot that must be given every week, starting in the second trimester – usually between 16 and 20 weeks of pregnancy. The shot is given in the upper thigh or hip. Some women report soreness, swelling, itching, or bruising at the site of the injection. The shot is needed every week so there is a steady supply of 17P in the body. If you use 17P, it is very important that you get all of the shots once you start. The shots will be given until 37 weeks of pregnancy.

There is a card at the back of this booklet for you to use to keep track of your 17P shots.



Questions? Need Information?

Studies show that 17P is safe. Studies also show that there are no serious side effects for the mother or the baby. It is okay to still have many questions about 17P. Health care providers can answer these questions. You can also go to www.mombaby.org and click on **17P** for more information.

How well does 17P work?

There is no promise 17P will lead to a full-term pregnancy, but it may decrease your chances of having another preterm birth. 17P lowers a woman's risk of repeat preterm birth by one-third (33%). Remember, getting your 17P shot every week may be the single best thing you can do to help keep your baby from coming too early. For babies, delaying a preterm birth by even one or two weeks can make a huge difference.

Do I have to pay for 17P?

If you have Medicaid, you do not have to pay for this medication. Many private health insurance plans cover 17P; check with your insurance provider about coverage and copayments. There is an assistance program for women who cannot afford treatment due to lack of insurance and/or high copayments. If you do not have insurance, you may be eligible to receive this drug for free. Talk with your health care provider about free medicine programs.

What else can you do to help prevent a preterm birth?



- Avoid cigarette smoke. If you smoke, talk to your doctor or nurse about quitting.
- Talk to your health care provider about how you can manage medical problems such as high blood pressure and diabetes.
- Use a condom when you have sex to protect against sexually transmitted infections.

More things you can do...

- Go to all prenatal care appointments, even if you feel fine.
- Talk to your health care provider about any drugs, medicines, or herbal remedies you are taking.
- Talk to your health care provider 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 health care provider if you feel burning or pain when you urinate OR if you notice a discharge from your vagina that has an unusual color or odor. You may have an infection.
- Call your health care provider immediately if you have any signs of preterm labor. There is a list of signs of preterm labor in the back of this booklet.



Where can you get help?

Pregnancy is a time when most women have a lot of different and strong feelings. While many of these emotions are joyful, it is perfectly normal for you to feel overwhelmed sometimes. Women who have already had a premature baby may feel even more stressed and worried at times than other mothers. Remember, you are not alone. Now is the time to let others help you. Reach out to friends and family members. Ask people in your community for help if you need it.

It can be hard to get to your health care provider's office for the 17P shot every week. Don't be afraid to talk to your health care provider about finding a time that works for both of you.

If you have Medicaid coverage, you may be able to receive services from a pregnancy care manager. Your care manager can help you get the resources you need during your pregnancy and will also help make sure you don't miss any shots. Ask your health care provider about pregnancy care management services.



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 symptoms!!

Helpful resources for pregnant women in North Carolina

Contact your local health department for prenatal services and information.

Text BABY to 511411 and get FREE messages on your cell phone to help you through your pregnancy and your baby's first year. For more information go to www.text4baby.org.

Quitline NC offers free, confidential, one-on-one support to help you or someone you love quit using tobacco. **1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) or www.QuitlineNC.org.** You can also go to www.YouQuitTwoQuit.com.

The March of Dimes offers lots of information about pregnancy, childbirth, and newborns. They have great information for parents who have had preterm babies. www.marchofdimes.com

My health care provider: _____

Other important numbers: _____



Enjoying your pregnancy

Your pregnancy is a special time. Take time to rest and enjoy thinking about the baby you are bringing into the world. Be nice to yourself! You should feel very proud of the commitment you are making to giving your baby the best shot you can at a healthy start to life.

17P INJECTION TRACKING TOOL

Weeks of Pregnancy	Date of Shot	Notes
16		
17		
18		
19		
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22		
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24		
25		
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37+...HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



for more information visit
www.mombaby.org



UNC
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

