

Do you want to know?

Preterm Labor

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What is it?

Preterm labor is the labor that occurs between 20 and 37 weeks of pregnancy.

What do you need to know?



Drugs

Take medications as prescribed by your physician to stop the contractions.



Diet

Maintain a well-balanced diet.



Activity

- Follow carefully the instructions of your physician.
- Avoid lifting heavy objects.
- Pace necessary activities to avoid over exertion.



Therapeutic Measures

- Avoid prenatal breast feeding preparation measures such as nipple rolling. Such activities increase uterine irritability.
- Find pleasurable ways to help compensate for limitation of activity and boost your spirit (reading, music, etc...) if you are advised to be on complete bed rest.
- Empty your bladder at least every 2 hours while you are awake to avoid pressure on the uterus.



Considerations

- Contact your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:
 - Uterine contractions that occur every 10 minutes or less

- Mild menstrual-like cramps felt low in the abdomen
- Feelings of pelvic pressure that may feel like the baby is pressing down. The pressure may be constant or intermittent
- Leaking of vaginal blood or vaginal yellow fluids or sudden increase in vaginal discharge
- Abdominal cramping with or without diarrhea
- Low dull backache felt below the waistline whether intermittent or constant.

- Quit smoking as it increases the risk of preterm labor.
- Eliminate sexual activity.

Any pregnant woman should report to her doctor the following symptoms:

- Severe or persistent headache
- Blurred vision
- Abdominal pain/epigastric (stomach) pain
- Temperature more than 37.8°C
- Burning upon urination or decreased urination
- Flank (lateral low back) pain
- Decrease in fetal movements
- Swelling of hands, face, legs and feet

INSTRUCTIONS

The content of this educational leaflet is of general information. Ask your physician or health care provider if this content applies to you.

Prepared by the Nursing Services in coordination with other health care disciplines.