

Preterm Birth Prevention Clinic

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اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

Preterm Birth Prevention Clinic

This is a specialist clinic which monitors and treats women and pregnant people who are at higher risk of spontaneous preterm birth under 34 weeks of pregnancy or late miscarriage.

This clinic is led by a Consultant Obstetrician and a Preterm birth specialist midwife. We are based in antenatal clinic at Whiston Hospital, Level 2.

We offer specialised advice to women and pregnant people who have previously experienced a late pregnancy loss, pre-term birth, and to those who are at increased risk of pre-term birth. Most patients are offered an appointment in our clinic between 16 and 22 weeks of pregnancy depending on the reason for referral.

Who is at risk of preterm birth?

You are considered at greater increased risk if:

- You had a previous spontaneous preterm birth or late miscarriage under 34 weeks.
- Your waters broke before 34 weeks in a previous pregnancy.
- You have an unusually shaped womb, a uterine septum, or Asherman's syndrome.
- You have had a cervical cerclage (stitch) in a previous pregnancy.

You are considered at moderately increased risk if you have had:

- A caesarean section during labour at 10cm (fully) dilated.
- Significant surgery on your cervix (neck of the womb), for example to remove abnormal cells.

If you have one or more of these risk factors your midwife will refer you to the clinic at your booking appointment.

Smoking doubles the risk of preterm delivery. If you are a smoker, your midwife will refer you for smoking cessation support. If you stop smoking you and your baby will benefit from a reduced risk of preterm birth, stillbirth, growth restriction and sudden infant death syndrome (known as cot death).

What does the preterm birth prevention clinic do?

Our aim is to support you by monitoring you closely in the middle part of pregnancy and acting to reduce your chance of premature birth or second trimester pregnancy loss.

We will look at your previous history and the results of the tests you have in the clinic to decide if you need extra treatment to reduce your risk of preterm birth.

We will discuss your individual care plan with you at your first visit. You will have an individual care plan because not all treatments are appropriate or effective for all patients. Most patients in the moderate risk group are discharged after one visit if their cervical length on scan is reassuring.

It is important to understand that while there is evidence to suggest that surveillance and treatment can reduce your risk, unfortunately, not all miscarriages and preterm births can be prevented.

What tests will I have?

We will offer you one or more of these investigations, depending on your risk factors:

- Your urine will be dipped to check for infection.
- You may be offered vaginal swabs (using a speculum) to look for infection.
- We may offer you a vaginal swab Fibronectin test (fFN).
- A trans-vaginal scan performed by a Consultant Obstetrician. This is a scan where an ultrasound probe is placed into the vagina. This allows us to measure your cervix to assess for shortening. Your bladder should be empty for this scan.

Do the tests have any risks?

All these tests are safe for you and your baby.

How often do I need to come to the clinic?

Our team will discuss this with you at your first visit, but we see most of our patients about every four weeks between 16 and 24 weeks of pregnancy.

You will see your midwife for routine community appointments as well as being seen in this clinic. The preterm birth prevention clinic is extra care for women more likely to have a preterm birth, it does not replace other care you have.

It is very important for you to still have your 16-week antenatal appointment with your community midwife. If you do not have a community appointment, then please contact **Community midwives office on 0151 430 1492** and they can advise about appointments for the community team.

What treatment will I be offered if I am at high risk of premature birth or late miscarriage?

These may include one or more of the following:

- Cervical cerclage, where a stitch is put around the neck of your womb.
- Progesterone (hormone) suppositories which you put into your vagina.
- Arabin pessary (soft silicone ring that sits inside the vagina)
- Antimicrobials in confirmed infection.
- Omega 3 supplements

How can I help myself?

Smoking doubles the risk of preterm birth, and we advise to stop immediately. Professional help strongly increases the success rates, and we will refer you to our smoking cessation team.

You can also call the NHS Smokefree Helpline – 0300 123 1044. Or visit the Smokefree website: www.smokefree.nhs.uk.

Douching or rinsing your vagina interferes with the healthy bacteria living in the vagina and increases the risk of bacterial vaginosis. We advise you not to douche your vagina.

Dental hygiene – poor oral hygiene and mouth infections increases the risk of infections around the baby and placenta. It is free to see the dentist during pregnancy for all women and we recommend a routine check-up for all our women, alongside good oral hygiene.

Diet – eating a diet rich in vegetables, wholegrains, fruit, oily fish and fibre is beneficial. Increasing the intake of omega-3 in the diet either by eating oily fish or taking a supplement can reduce the risk of preterm birth.

What to look out for

Please contact maternity triage on 0151 290 4489 immediately if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- A slow trickle or a gush of clear or pinkish fluid from your vagina or any increase in vaginal discharge
- Backache
- Cramps like strong period pains
- A frequent need to urinate
- Strong pain, a smelly discharge or bleeding from your vagina
- Feeling feverish, sick or have a temperature
- A feeling of pressure in your pelvis
- Contractions more often than every 10 minutes
- Any vaginal bleeding

Preterm Birth Prevention Team

The preterm birth prevention clinic is led by two Obstetric Consultants, Mrs Ria Agass and Miss Caroline Hicks and Specialist preterm birth Midwife Mrs Jen Chean.

The number for Mrs Agass and Miss Hicks secretary is 0151 676 5289.



Mrs Ria Agass



Miss Caroline Hicks



Mrs Jen Chean

Useful contact information and organisations

Maternity Triage at Whiston Hospital – 0151 290 4489.

Tommy's Website: www.tommys.org – signs and symptoms of premature labour page.

Bliss website: www.bliss.org.uk – A charity with support and resources for families of babies born sick or premature.

Miscarriage Association: www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk - A charity offering support to people affected by miscarriage.

Twins Trust: www.twinstrust.org – a charity offering support for families with twins, triplets and more.

Sands: www.sands.org.uk - A charity that helps parents who have lost a baby, provides research and training for healthcare professionals and campaigns for better bereavement care.

Little Heartbeats: www.little-heartbeats.org.uk - A charity that promotes awareness of preterm prelabour rupture of membranes (PPROM).

There may be students present during your consultation as part of their on-going training.

Please let the staff know if you wish to be seen by a qualified professional only.



**Mersey and West Lancashire
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

St Helens Hospital
Marshall Cross Road,
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA
Telephone: 01744 26633