

What is preterm labour? Preterm labour is labour that starts too early (more than three weeks before your due date). It may lead to preterm birth.

Why be concerned about preterm labour?

Preterm babies are at greater risk the earlier they are born. They are more likely to:

- Have trouble breathing, feeding and keeping warm
- Suffer long-term problems (seeing, learning, walking, breathing)
- Be too small and weak to live
- Suffer from infections
- Have longer hospital stays

When is preterm labour more likely? Half of all preterm births occur to women with no known risk factors. These factors increase a woman's risk of preterm labour:

- Tobacco smoke
- Previous preterm birth
- Injury
- Alcohol and drug use
- Being pregnant with twins or multiples

What reduces your risk? Take care of yourself. You will reduce your risk of preterm labour if you:

- Seek prenatal care early in pregnancy, including dental care. Consult a doctor or midwife and visit your dentist.
- Don't smoke and avoid second-hand smoke. Call the Calgary Health Region at 781-1450 for information on Expecting to Quit, a free stop smoking class for pregnant women and new moms.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs. Call AADAC at 1-866-332-2322 for information and counselling.
- Avoid all injuries. Wear a seatbelt when in a vehicle. Seek help if living with family violence. Report injuries to your doctor.
- Choose a healthy lifestyle. Call the Calgary Health Region at 781-1450 to find out about prenatal classes. Call the Best Beginning program at 228-8221 for information and resources if you are living on a low income.

Know what to do – Contact your doctor or midwife or go to the hospital right away if you think you are having preterm labour.

Foothills Medical Centre 944-1351
(Labour and delivery)
1403 - 29th Street NW

Rockyview General Hospital 943-3191
(Maternity Triage Nurse)
7007 - 14th Street SW

Peter Lougheed Centre 943-5732
(Antepartum)
3500 - 26th Ave NE



Preterm Labour Know the Signs

These signs may be related to preterm labour:

- Contractions (may be painful or painless)
- Cramps (may feel like menstrual cramps or gas pains)
- Unusual fluid or bleeding from the vagina
- Change or increase in vaginal discharge
- Full or heavy feeling in the vagina
- Changes in low back pain

For more information contact: