

**Tarrant County
Public Health**

17P



and

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 that are born too early can have health complications, such as brain damage, breathing and vision problems.

Preterm birth is also the leading cause of infant death in Tarrant County.

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 and vision problems and jaundice.

For babies, delaying a preterm birth by even one or two weeks can make a difference in their survival.

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 nine babies in Tarrant County 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 (doctor, midwife, nurse) 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. In case you started prenatal care late, shots may be started up to 23 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 36 weeks of pregnancy.

There is a page near 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 call or e-mail the Tarrant County Prematurity Prevention staff at 817-321-4717 (17P@tarrantcounty.com).

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/CHIP, you do not have to pay for this medication.

If you have private insurance, check with your insurance provider to see if you qualify for reimbursement.

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

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



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 receive Medicaid/CHIP you may be able to receive services through a 17P Administration Nursing Care Management Service. Ask your health care provider about it.



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 health care provider right away if you have any of these symptoms!

Helpful resources for pregnant women in Tarrant County

The local Medicaid office, 2-1-1 Texas and **Tarrantcares.org** are sources immediately available.

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**.

Healthy Texas Babies is another resource for expectant mothers who want to learn more about having a healthy pregnancy.

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/HealthyTexasBabies/home.aspx>

The Tarrant County Public Health Women, Infant, Children (WIC) Program is a nutrition education program which provides supplemental foods to promote good health for pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants and children up to age five. Call 817-321-5400.

Tarrant County Freedom From Smoking offers free, confidential, one-on-one support to help you or someone you love quit using tobacco.

Call 817-321-4976 or e-mail: **smokefree@tarrantcounty.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. For more information, go to: **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 of life.



17P INJECTION TRACKING TOOL

**Weeks of
Pregnancy**

Date of Shot

Notes

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37+...Happy Birthday!





For more information, call
817-321-4717

**Tarrant County
Public Health**

**17P
Initiative**

A program for prematurity prevention

Adapted from:



Community Care
of North Carolina



Tarrant County Public Health
A nationally accredited health department



UNC
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

