



Preterm Labour

Preterm labour can happen in any pregnancy!

What is preterm labour?

Preterm labour is labour that starts too early (more than 3 weeks before your due date). It may lead to preterm birth.

Why be concerned about preterm labour?

Preterm babies are at greater risk of health problems the earlier they are born. They are more likely to have trouble breathing, feeding, and keeping warm; have long-term problems with learning, seeing, walking, or breathing; suffer from infections; or may even be too small and weak to live.

Am I likely to have preterm labour?

Preterm labour can happen in *any* pregnancy, but some things can increase your risk:

- Smoking
- Alcohol, cannabis, and other drug use
- Injury (including family violence)
- Previous preterm birth
- Twins or triplets

How do I know if I am experiencing preterm labour?

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, talk to your doctor. If you cannot talk to your doctor, call Health Link (8-1-1). Trust your instincts – if you think you are having preterm labour, go to the hospital right away.

- Contractions or 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

How can I reduce my risk of having preterm labour?

- Take care of yourself. See a doctor early in pregnancy, and keep your scheduled visits throughout your pregnancy.
- See a dentist
- Don't smoke, and avoid second-hand smoke. For help quitting, visit www.AlbertaQuits.ca
- Avoid alcohol and drugs. Talk to someone on your Alex team for help quitting
- Avoid injuries by wearing your seatbelt, seeking help for family violence, and reporting injuries to your doctor

