

Maternity

# Your baby may be born very early (26 - 28 weeks)

***The prevention and control of infection is a major Trust priority.***

***Please help us by observing the signs and reminders displayed around the Hospital and by asking staff:***

***"Have you cleaned your hands?" before they care for you.***

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This leaflet is designed to answer some of your questions. Please ask us anything, even if it has been discussed already.

Your baby may be born very early (26-28 weeks)

We expect that your baby will be born between 26 - 28 weeks of pregnancy, that is more than 3 months early. This leaflet is designed to answer some of the questions you may have at this time. Please ask your midwife, paediatrician or obstetrician about anything that is in this leaflet, or anything you are concerned about.

## What happens if my baby is born prematurely?

If your baby is born between 26 and 28 weeks of pregnancy he / she will be born very early and will need a lot of extra help.

## How will you help my baby?

We will start to help your baby as soon as possible after birth by putting the baby onto a special bed to keep him / her warm. We usually need to help baby to breathe by putting a tube into baby's lungs. We will give some medicine into the lungs to help the lungs work better. If baby responds to this treatment we will move baby to the Neonatal Unit.

## What are the chances for my baby? Will he / she make it?

Most babies born at this stage of pregnancy do very well. However, some babies become very sick. Unfortunately, a few babies die from being born so early. More than half of babies born at this stage of pregnancy who are admitted to the Neonatal Unit survive. We will do everything we can to help your baby.

We cannot say what will happen to your baby. Everybody is different. When babies survive being born so early, more than half of them grow up in the same way as other children. However, some premature babies need extra help at school. Some babies born at this stage of pregnancy will have physical problems.

About 5% of children born at this stage of pregnancy will always need a lot of help with everyday things such as dressing or feeding.

Compared to a baby born at the expected time, your baby will be very small and thin and his or her skin will be much darker.

## How long will my baby be on the Neonatal Unit?

Babies stay on the Unit until their temperature is normal and they can breathe and feed normally. All this usually happens around the time when the baby was due, but can take a bit longer.

If you do not live locally then we will try to move baby to a hospital closer to your home when the baby is well enough.

Please do not hesitate to ask your midwife or paediatrician any questions at any time

Draper et al 2003

BMJ 327: 872

Nuffield Council on Bioethics 2006

Critical Care Decisions in Fetal and Neonatal Medicine: - Ethical Issues

Adapted from the Liverpool Women's Hospital document.