

## PARENT INFORMATION

### You are now between 23 weeks to 23 weeks + 6 days in your pregnancy

#### **Q. What happens if my baby is born at this time?**

A. Most babies do not survive birth at this stage of pregnancy. Babies who survive labour may be offered resuscitation and if they survive this transitional time are admitted to intensive care. Many die after admission, but if they continue to survive they will need intensive care for at least one month and will need to be in the neonatal unit for at least 4 months. Babies born this early, who survive and go home, have a high risk of disability such as having difficulties with movements and walking or difficulties with learning.

#### **Q. Will my baby's care be discussed with me before birth?**

A. We will try to discuss your baby's care with you before your baby is born. Some families want to express their views whilst others prefer to accept whatever happens or let us decide what is best for the baby. If you want to tell us your views please do so. If the pregnancy has otherwise progressed well with no other risk factors, we often start resuscitation and see how the baby responds; knowing that if there is a poor response we can stop.

If you want us to do what we think is best please say so. We want to take account of your views before birth but we cannot always predict what is going to happen during labour and delivery. The situation is different from when babies are born later in pregnancy. Sometimes there is not enough time to discuss options in detail so it would help to discuss them now.

#### **Q. What will the doctors talk to me about?**

A

- Is your baby likely to die or to survive?
- If your baby survives labour, how can we help him / her after birth?
- If your baby survives, what are the chances that he / she will be disabled?

#### **Q. What will my baby look like?**

A. Your baby will be very tiny and thin. His or her skin will be very dark. Your baby will be fully formed on the outside but baby's organs may not have developed enough to keep him or her alive.

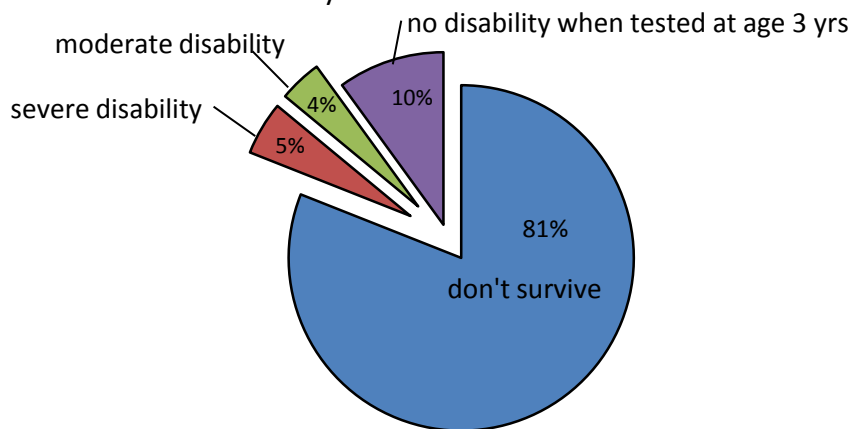
#### **Q. What happens after my baby is born?**

A. The Doctor will assess him / her and care will be based on what we feel is in your baby's best interests. It is difficult to know how many interventions we should try to revive your baby if he / she is not responding but your views will be taken into account. We want to treat you and your baby with respect and dignity. Please feel free to tell us the best way to do this.

## Q. What is the outlook for my baby born so early?

A. The chart below shows the results from a large study EPICURE 2. These are percentages of babies who are born alive

23 weeks to 23 weeks + 6 days



**Severe disability** – includes disorders requiring high dependency on carers, e.g. cerebral palsy preventing a child from walking, profound hearing problems and blindness.

**Moderate disability** – includes children who have reached a reasonable level of independence, e.g. cerebral palsy (child still able to walk), lower than average IQ, hearing loss correctable by a hearing aid, impaired vision without blindness.

**Mild disability** – includes those with mild learning problems or other impairments such as squints, which do not interfere significantly with everyday life.

### Reference

Neurological and developmental outcome in extremely preterm children born in England in 1995 and 2006: the EPICure studies. Moore T, Hennessy EM, Myles J, Johnson SJ, Draper ES, Costeloe KL, Marlow N, BMJ 2012 Dec 4; 345: e7961. Epub 2012 Dec 4.

EPICURE – [www.epicure.ac.uk](http://www.epicure.ac.uk)

### **Further information**

This leaflet is intended to give you information and answer some of your immediate questions. Please feel free to discuss any further questions and concerns with your midwife or doctor.

The following resources may be useful:

Bliss – [www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk)

Tommy's – [www.tommys.org](http://www.tommys.org)

