

PARENT INFORMATION

You are now between 26 weeks to 26 weeks + 6 days in your pregnancy

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

A. This 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, neonatologist / paediatrician or obstetrician about anything that is in this leaflet, or any other questions you may have. We will do our best to answer as honestly as we are able.

Q. What happens if my baby is born prematurely?

A. If your baby is born at this time he / she will need some extra help.

Q. How will you help my baby?

A. We will help your baby as soon as possible after birth by putting the baby onto a special bed (resuscitaire) to keep him / her warm. We usually need to help baby to breathe. This may be by putting a tube into baby's lungs and giving some medicine (surfactant) into the lungs to help the lungs work better and then providing some assisted ventilation. Or we may put the baby on CPAP where small prongs are put in the nostrils and air or oxygen is given at a slightly increased pressure to help your baby to breathe. If baby responds to this treatment we will move baby to the Neonatal Unit and nurse him or her in an incubator. We will give Intravenous fluids until baby is able to tolerate full milk feeds.

Q. What could I do to best help my baby?

A. The best way a mother can help her baby is to express breast milk for him or her. Breast milk contains lots of natural ingredients to help babies fight off infections and tummy complications. Only mothers own breast milk can do this. Breast milk should be expressed as soon as possible after birth and regularly every 3 hours. Your midwife will show you how to do this.

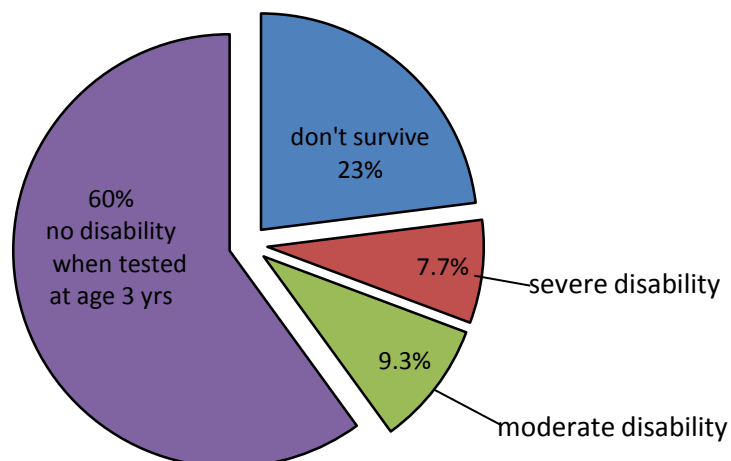
Q. What will be the initial and long term outcomes of my baby born so early?

A. 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 at this gestation.

We cannot say what will happen to your baby. 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.

The chart below shows the results from a large study EPICURE 2

26 weeks to 26 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.

References

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

Q. How long will my baby be on the Neonatal Unit?

A. Babies stay on the Unit until they can breathe and feed normally. 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.

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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

Tommy's – www.tommys.org