

How will we care for your baby if it is born very prematurely?

Your baby will receive the best care that we can provide. This depends on the baby's age in the following ways:-

22 weeks - your baby will be offered comfort care.

23 weeks - at this stage of pregnancy there is the greatest uncertainty about the outcome for your baby. After discussion with a senior doctor, intensive care will be offered if you both agree this is appropriate. Otherwise your baby will be given comfort care with no treatments to support life.

24 weeks - your baby will receive intensive support and be resuscitated unless you and the doctors agree that there is little hope of survival and this might not be what is best for your baby.

25 weeks and over - your baby will receive care to help support breathing and keep him/her warm, receive intensive support and be resuscitated if necessary. It is likely that your baby will be transferred to the neonatal intensive care unit to receive specialist and ongoing care.

Please be reassured that the neonatologist will keep you fully informed of your baby's progress after delivery and involve you in any decisions about the best type of care for your baby.

Parent Details

Date:

Number of weeks pregnant (weeks & days):

Consultant in charge of your care:

Glossary

Obstetrician – a doctor who specialises in caring for women who are pregnant

Paediatrician – a doctor who specialises in the care of children and babies

Neonatologist – a doctor who specialises in the care of sick babies

If you require further support please contact: TinyLife - Northern Ireland Charity for Families of Premature and Sick Babies on **028 9081 5050** or by email at info@tinylife.org.uk

SANDS - Still Birth and Neonatal Deaths on **077 4099 3450** or by email at steven.guy@uk-sands.org

 www.facebook.com/sandsni

Having an Extremely Premature Baby

What It Means For You and Your Baby



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This leaflet will be read with your obstetrician or paediatrician who can also answer any questions you may have

Having an extremely premature baby

You have been given this leaflet as you are at risk of having an extremely premature baby which may be delivered between 23 and 27 weeks.

You will need to make some very important choices about your care before and after labour if this happens. The doctor or senior nurse will take you through this information to help you decide what is best for you, your baby and your family. They will discuss what it may mean for your baby if he or she is born too soon. Babies born extremely prematurely may not survive or may have long term problems. The chance of your baby surviving can depend on many factors and the consultant will try to explain your individual situation.

What might happen when you are ready to deliver?

If you are at risk of having a very premature baby we may need to transfer you to another hospital to provide the care your baby needs. Transfer may happen when your baby is still in the womb. Sometimes your baby may be transferred after their birth to another hospital. You may be offered the opportunity to visit a neonatal unit which is where your baby will receive specialist care if they are delivered early.

What it means for your baby if he or she is born to soon

Babies born early may not survive, may survive and be healthy or may survive but have long term problems and disabilities. The chance of your baby surviving increases with each additional week of pregnancy and the risk of disability decreases. At this stage we cannot predict the final outcome for your baby.

What can you expect if your baby is born at 23, 24 or 25 weeks?

- Baby does not survive
- ◐ Baby has severe to moderate disability
- Baby has mild or no disability

23 weeks:



24 weeks:



25 weeks:



The information used in the chart is a guide based on an England & Wales study, EPICURE2 in 2006, which assessed the outcomes of large groups of babies born during these weeks of pregnancy at 30 months of age. It is the largest dataset available to provide an indicator for NI parents.

What do we mean by different levels of disability?

Severe disability - includes conditions that require a high dependency on carers, eg cerebral palsy which prevents a child from walking, profound hearing problems and blindness

Moderate disability – includes conditions where children have a reasonable level of independence e.g. cerebral palsy but where the child can walk, lower than average IQ, hearing correctable with a hearing aid, impaired vision but not blind

Mild disability - includes mild learning problems or other impairments which do not interfere significantly with everyday life.

What kind of problems can an extremely premature baby have?

Babies born extremely prematurely have very immature organs. At this stage it will be difficult to tell what problems your baby may have. Some babies are at an increased risk of problems later in childhood. Some of the potential problems include:-

- Damage to the brain
- Damage to their eyes
- Hearing problems
- Damage to their lungs
- Problems with feeding and long term growth