

Information for patients and carers

Preterm Birth Prevention Clinic

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping, wavy bands of blue. The top band is a light blue, the middle is a medium blue, and the bottom is a dark blue. The waves flow from left to right across the width of the page.

Preterm Birth – Definition and Risks

Preterm birth (PTB) occurs when a baby is born before 37 weeks of pregnancy. This happens for 7 out of 100 babies born in the UK. Being born preterm can lead to issues which carry on throughout a person's life, such as difficulty with hearing or seeing, being more likely to develop some long-term illnesses, or needing more time to develop socially.

Who is invited to Preterm Birth Prevention clinic?

PTB Clinic is for women who are at risk of delivering their baby before 37 weeks, to provide them with extra care. Examples of risks include:

- Previous PTB before 34 weeks of pregnancy
- Previous spontaneous loss of a pregnancy between 16 – 34 weeks
- Previous preterm prelabour rupture of membranes before 34 weeks
- Previous treatment or surgery to the cervix
- Previous caesarean section towards the end of labour
- Having a differently shaped womb

What happens at Preterm Birth Prevention clinic?

At clinic there will be an obstetrician and a midwife. You will be asked questions about your current pregnancy and any previous pregnancies, and some general questions about your health. Your blood pressure may be taken, and a sample of your urine. You will then undergo a transvaginal ultrasound scan.

You may also be asked to take a swab of your vagina to see if any infections are present which require treatment. This is because infection increases the risk of your baby being born early. There will be time for your questions at the end.

Transvaginal ultrasound

A transvaginal ultrasound involves a small ultrasound probe being inserted into your vagina. The part inserted is the same size and shape as a regular-sized tampon and the procedure is safe to perform in pregnancy. Some women report feeling pressure; however, it should not be painful. You are in control and can ask to stop at any point. The ultrasound is used to assess the length of your cervix (the medical name for the neck of your womb) this is the medical name for the neck of your womb, which sits at the top of your vagina. Knowing the length of your cervix helps predict how likely it is that you will go into preterm labour.

Using the information you have given us, your medical records and the results of the scan, the team will discuss the possible next steps. A joint decision is made over what is the right care for you.

What are the outcomes of attending Preterm Birth Prevention clinic (PTBP)?

If we think the risk of your baby being born early is low, you may continue with routine pregnancy care from your midwife¹. If we think the risk is higher, we can offer you treatment to help stop you going into labour early. There are two main treatment options:

1. A special tablet called a progesterone pessary is inserted into the vagina. An oral tablet Omega 3 is also prescribed.

2. A stitch called a cervical cerclage is put into the cervix to keep it closed.

Your doctor/midwife will talk through any treatment with you in more detail and answer any questions you have.

Where is the clinic held?

The PTB Prevention Clinic is at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital, in the Sumner Suite on level 3 of the main hospital building.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact maternity services on **01772524448**.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware

<https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/>

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk

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