

When you are at risk of delivering your baby early (Prematurity Prevention Clinic)

Maternity Services

Information for Patients

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Introduction

Prematurity Prevention Clinic (PPC) is an antenatal clinic. Women who are at risk of early (preterm) delivery are seen for investigations and treatments to try to reduce the chance of preterm birth.

An early labour is one that occurs spontaneously before 37 weeks.

Who is this clinic for?

Women with the following in their history may be offered an appointment at the PPC:

- Late miscarriage after 15 weeks pregnant in the last pregnancy
- Early birth up to 34 weeks and 6 days pregnant in the last pregnancy
- Treatment to the cervix for abnormal smears (only if performed more than once, or if a large amount of the cervix was removed).
- Caesarean section at full dilatation in the last pregnancy
- A womb that is a different shape or size to normal (congenital abnormality of the uterus such as bicornuate (heart shaped) uterus)
- In a previous pregnancy having a stitch placed round the neck of the womb (cervical cerclage)
- Plans of care may vary on an individual basis

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or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What will happen at the appointments?

At your first appointment you will meet the team and discuss how often you will have PPC appointments and what investigations or treatments are best for you. Attending this clinic does not replace care with your community midwife or other scans.

You may be offered a swab test (speculum) examination. This is for your doctor or midwife to test for infection, as some vaginal infections are linked with a higher risk of preterm birth.

The doctor may then perform a scan of your cervix (transvaginal) to measure the length of the cervix. A probe is gently inserted into the vagina to check the length of the neck of the womb. The images are then printed and stored in your main hospital notes.

What happens if the cervix is shortening on scan?

The cervix is measured by an internal scan. If the measurement is less than 25mm then the consultant may suggest intervention to reduce the chance of preterm birth. The cervix may shorten at any point so you will be offered regular transvaginal scans to measure the length.

There are different treatment choices that the doctor will discuss with you that can reduce the chance of preterm birth. They may include:

- Vaginal progesterone pessaries are a hormone treatment. They are inserted daily until 34 weeks of pregnancy.
- Cervical cerclage: a stitch inserted into the neck of the womb (cervix). This is a surgical procedure, done by an obstetrician, under a spinal anaesthetic in theatre.
- Arabin pessary: a flexible ring that can be inserted inside the vagina in the clinic, and sits around the cervix. It can be inserted and removed without any anaesthetic required.

If appropriate you may be invited to take part in one of the ongoing research projects.

What is research?

There are many research studies taking place in the UK now, to try to understand the causes of preterm birth, and to develop better ways to reduce the chance of preterm birth. The PPC at Leicester takes part in a number of such research studies.

You may be offered the chance to take part in one of the research studies. If you are eligible, your doctor or midwife will explain what the study involves, and give you time to decide whether or not to take part. If you do not wish to take part or withdraw from the study this will not affect the treatment you get from the PPC.

If you see a poster in the waiting room and think you may be eligible for one of our research studies, please ask the PPC doctor or midwife about it.

Contact details

Please see the University of Hospitals website for more information on pregnancy and cervical suture.

To access an online version of this and further leaflets please visit our website:

yourhealth.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/

Leicester Royal Infirmary Antenatal assessment area 0116 2587025 8.30 to 4.30 Mon to Fri

Leicester General Hospital Pregnancy assessment service 0116 2584829 8.30 to 4.30 Mon to Fri

Please write any notes or questions you may have here:

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على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

Previous reference:

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