

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 happens suddenly before 37 weeks.

Who is this clinic for?

We may offer you an appointment at PPC if you have:

- lost a baby after 15 weeks pregnant (late miscarriage).
- had an preterm birth in your last pregnancy. Up to 33 weeks and 6 days pregnant.
- had treatment on your cervix (the lower part of the womb) more than once or had a large part removed.
- had a caesarean section at full dilatation in your 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 had a stitch placed round the neck of the womb (cervical cerclage).
- care plans may be different for each person.
- had Ashermanns Syndrome.
- had Ehlers Danlos Syndrome Trachelectomy.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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

What will happen at the appointments?

At your first appointment you will meet the team and talk about how often you will have a PPC appointments. The team will talk about what investigations or treatments are best for you.

Attending this clinic does not replace care with your community midwife or other scans.

If needed we may offer you a swab test (speculum) examination. This is for your doctor or midwife to test for infection. Some vaginal infections are linked with a higher risk of preterm birth. Please note that this is not done routinely.

The doctor may then do a scan of your cervix (transvaginal) to measure the length of the cervix. They will gently insert a probe into your 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?

We measure the cervix using an internal scan (transvaginal 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 offered regular transvaginal scans to measure the length.

There are different treatment choices that the doctor will talk with you about. All these treatment will help to reduce the chance of preterm birth. They may include:

- **Hormone treatment:** Vaginal progesterone pessaries (often called Cyclogest). They are put in every day until 34 weeks of pregnancy.
- **Surgery:** Cervical cerclage is a surgical procedure, done by an obstetrician, under a spinal anaesthetic in theatre. A stitch is placed into the neck of the womb (cervix).
- **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.

We may invite you to take part in one of the ongoing research projects.

What is research?

There are many research studies taking place in the UK now. This is to try and understand the causes of preterm birth. It can help us 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. They will 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.

