

Risk factors for preterm birth

Previous history of preterm birth

Age: Adolescent or older mother

Lifestyle factors: Smoking, alcohol, drugs, excess work or activity

Multiple pregnancies: Twins or more

Infections: Urinary tract, malaria, HIV, syphilis, bacterial vaginosis

Chronic conditions: Diabetes, hypertension, anaemia, asthma, thyroid disease

Nutritional status: Undernutrition, obesity



Risk factors which require health provider intervention

Maternal health: Cervical incompetence

Pregnancy complications: Pre-eclampsia, uterine rupture, health concerns for foetus

Maternal psychological health: Depression, violence

Preventing preterm birth

Before conception

- Family planning - healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies
- Education and empowerment for women (especially teenagers)
- Support good nutrition
- Address lifestyle choices e.g. alcohol, smoking, drugs
- Prevention of infection (HIV, STIs)



During pregnancy

- Regular antenatal care visits
- Screen/treat infections and pre-existing conditions
- Reduce excessive physical workload
- Support adequate nutrition
- Reduce non-medically indicated Caesarian sections

Managing preterm birth

- Invest & plan for neonatal services
- Antenatal use of corticosteroids is high risk for preterm birth at 20 - 34 weeks
- Provide golden hour care: Resuscitation, oxygen management, thermal control, manage respiratory distress

