

### 15 million babies are born too soon every year

- More than one in 10 babies are born preterm, affecting families all around the world.
- Over one million children die each year due to complications of preterm birth.

### Rates of preterm birth are rising

- Preterm birth rates are increasing in almost all countries with reliable data.
- Prematurity is the leading cause of newborn deaths (babies in the first four weeks of life) and now the second-leading cause of death after pneumonia in children under the age of 5.

### Prevention of preterm birth must be accelerated

- Family planning, and increased empowerment of women, especially adolescents, plus improved quality of care before, between and during pregnancy can help to reduce preterm birth rates.

### Premature babies can be saved now with feasible, cost-effective care

- Over 75% of deaths from preterm birth complications can be prevented even without the availability of neonatal intensive care.

### Everyone has a role to play

- Everyone can help to prevent preterm births and improve the care of premature babies, accelerating progress towards the goal of halving deaths due to preterm birth by 2025.

### Together rapid change is possible

Together, as professionals, as policy-makers and as parents, we commit to our common goal: all pregnancies wanted and healthy, all women survive, and all babies – including those born too soon – with a healthy start in life, and thriving as children, fulfilling their potential as adults. The actions, research and innovation for preterm birth would improve reproductive and maternal health, reduce disability and chronic disease and build sustainable health systems.

#### More information:

March of Dimes, PMNCH, Save the Children, WHO. Born Too Soon: The Global Action Report on Preterm Birth. Eds CP Howson, MV Kinney, JE Lawn. World Health Organization. Geneva, 2012. Available at: [www.who.int/pmnch/media/news/2012/preterm\\_birth\\_report/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/pmnch/media/news/2012/preterm_birth_report/en/index.html)

#### Related materials and interactive map of preterm births:

[www.marchofdimes.com/borntoosoon](http://www.marchofdimes.com/borntoosoon)

#### Every Woman Every Child commitments to preterm birth:

[www.everywomaneverychild.org/](http://www.everywomaneverychild.org/)

World Prematurity Day on November 17  
[www.facebook.com/WorldPrematurityDay](http://www.facebook.com/WorldPrematurityDay)

Access the complete Joint Statement from the International Pediatrics Association and the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics on preterm births at:  
[ipa-world.org](http://ipa-world.org) and [figo.org](http://figo.org)

## FIGO / IPA JOINT STATEMENT



Photo: Colin Crowley/Save the Children

## PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF PRETERM BIRTHS



international pediatric association  
association internationale de pédiatrie  
asociación interna ional de pediastra

## The role of obstetricians

**Antenatal corticosteroids could save 400,000 babies each year if provided to 95% of women in preterm labor**

Many of the interventions to address preterm births are also well recognized for their benefits for fetal wellbeing and maternal health. Measures to be advocated for and implemented by the obstetrician include:

- Behavioral and community interventions to reduce smoking, prevent violence against pregnant women, and address other social stressors linked to increased risk of preterm delivery.
- Prevention of iatrogenic, multiple pregnancy
- Promotion of adequate spacing between pregnancies
- Antenatal care packages for all pregnant women and identification and treatment of pregnant women at higher risk of preterm birth
- Avoiding unnecessary induction of labor or caesarean section
- Provision of progesterone for prolonging pregnancy when appropriate and interventions for structural abnormalities
- Diagnosis and management of women in preterm labor with antenatal steroids and tocolytics
- Use of antibiotics for PROM to increase survival chances of preterm baby
- Strict infection control at preterm birth

## Proven interventions save lives

**Almost one million babies can be saved** per year if interventions with proven benefit were to be made universally available to women and their babies by 2025 (covering 95% of those at risk).



Photo: March of Dimes

Prevention and management of preterm birth requires close collaboration between all cadres of health workers, obstetricians and paediatricians with midwives and neonatal nurses. Evidence-based interventions to prevent preterm births and reduce death and disability among preterm babies have been identified, now it is time to act.

### PREVENTION OF PRETERM BIRTH

- Preconception care package, including family planning (e.g., birth spacing and adolescent-friendly services), education and nutrition especially for girls, and STI prevention
- Antenatal care packages for all women, including screening for and management of STIs, high blood pressure and diabetes; behavior change for lifestyle risks; and targeted care of women at increased risk of preterm birth
- Provider education to promote appropriate induction and cesarean
- Policy support including smoking cessation and employment safeguards of pregnant women

### MANAGEMENT OF PRETERM LABOR

- Tocolytics to slow down labor
- Antenatal corticosteroids
- Antibiotics for pPROM

### CARE OF THE PREMATURE BABY

- Essential and extra newborn care, especially feeding support
- Neonatal resuscitation
- Kangaroo Mother Care
- Chlorhexidine cord care
- Management of premature babies with complications, especially respiratory distress syndrome and infection
- Comprehensive neonatal intensive care, where capacity allows

REDUCTION OF PRETERM BIRTH

MORTALITY REDUCTION AMONG BABIES BORN PRETERM

## The role of paediatricians



In the event of a preterm birth, implementing key evidence-based interventions can save lives and improve outcomes. Working with midwives, nurses and others, paediatricians should help ensure:

- Essential newborn care for all babies, including thermal care, exclusive breastfeeding and infection prevention
- Neonatal resuscitation, as required.
- Extra care for small babies, including Kangaroo Mother Care and extra support for feeding and extra care for preterm babies with complications
- Management of babies with signs of infection
- Safe oxygen management and supportive care for babies with respiratory distress syndrome
- Management of babies with significant jaundice
- Hospital care of preterm babies with respiratory distress syndrome and, if appropriate and available, nasal CPAP and/or surfactant
- Neonatal intensive care

**Kangaroo Mother Care could save 450,000 babies each year if provided to 95% of premature**