

Progesterone

Use in pregnancy

What is progesterone?

Progesterone is a **natural hormone** made by your body. It helps to **keep a pregnancy safe and healthy**.

Why might I need it?

Progesterone can help **lower the risk of preterm birth**.

Preterm birth means your baby is born **too early**, before **37 weeks** of pregnancy.

Babies born early can have **health problems**, both short and long term.

Who might be offered progesterone?

A progesterone pessary may be offered if:

- You had a **previous early birth or pregnancy loss** between 20 and 34 weeks, or
- Your **cervix is shorter** than normal in your current pregnancy (seen on an ultrasound scan).

How do I take it?

- You will be given **progesterone pessaries** (like a small tablet).
- You **insert it into your vagina** once each evening.
- The usual dose is **200mg each night**.
- Treatment usually starts at **16 weeks** and continues until **36 weeks** of pregnancy.

How to use progesterone pessaries:

1. **Wash your hands** well.
2. Take the pessary **out of the wrapper**.
3. Find a comfortable position — you can:
 - Squat,
 - Lie on your back, or
 - Lie on your side.
4. Gently **push the pessary deep into your vagina**.
 - You can use a **lubricant** like KY Jelly if needed.
5. **Stay lying down for about 30 minutes** after inserting it.
6. The best time to use is **at night before going to bed**.
7. Throw away any wrappers and **wash your hands again**.
8. You may want to wear a **pantyliner** to catch any discharge.

Are there any side effects?

Most women **don't get side effects**.

Some women might feel:

- A little **irritation** or itch in the vagina,
 - Rarely, **headaches, nausea, or vomiting**.
- If you're worried, talk to your **doctor or midwife**.

How to reduce chance of preterm birth

The key strategies to reduce preterm and early term birth are:



Don't plan to give birth before **39 weeks** unless medically necessary.

Your **cervix length** should be measured during the mid-pregnancy scan.



Use **vaginal progesterone** if your cervix is shorter than 25mm.

If your cervix keeps shortening, your doctor may suggest a **cervical stitch (cerclage)**.



Use progesterone if you've had an **early birth before**.

If you **smoke or vape**, get support to **quit**.



Try to see the **same midwife or doctor** during your pregnancy (continuity of care).

Preterm Birth

More than **26,000 babies** are born **too soon** each year in Australia.

New research discoveries have led to the development of key strategies to safely lower the rate of preterm and early term birth, and are continuing to make pregnancies safer for women and their babies.



Australian Preterm and Early Term Birth Prevention Program



Scan the QR code to find out more.

everyweekcounts.com.au

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