



National Preterm
Birth Prevention
COLLABORATIVE

update

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Every Week Counts: National Preterm Birth Prevention Collaborative

Energised and showing signs of success



We are thrilled to share with you an update about the exciting progress being made by the Hospital Teams participating in the Every Week Counts - National Preterm Birth Prevention Collaborative.

Teams are collaborating regularly and sharing learning as they work towards a shared goal of 20% reduction in preterm and early term birth by 31 March 2024. Teams participating in the National Collaborative are working to introduce seven strategies that have been shown to reduce preterm and early term birth ^(1, 2).

A pull up banner promoting the key strategies to prevent preterm and early term birth has been made available by the Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance and can be accessed via the button below.

[View Banner Here](#)

Key strategies to prevent preterm and early term birth

-  1 No pregnancy to be ended until at least 39 weeks unless there is obstetric or medical justification.
-  2 Measurement of the length of the cervix at all mid-pregnancy scans.
-  3 Use of natural vaginal progesterone (200mg each evening) if the length of the cervix is less than 25mm.
-  4 If the length of the cervix continues to shorten despite progesterone treatment, consider surgical cerclage.
-  5 Use of vaginal progesterone if you have a prior history of spontaneous preterm birth.
-  6 Women who smoke should be identified and offered Quitline support.
-  7 To access continuity of care from a health professional during pregnancy where possible.

Optimal Timing of Birth

It is exciting to see the success being achieved by teams participating in the National Collaborative in reducing birth before 39 without medical indications.

A range of strategies are being tested in individual services to determine their effectiveness in reducing early birth. These include: introduction of a centralised induction of labour booking system, multidisciplinary huddles to review any planned births requested before 39 weeks, and introduction of early timing of birth conversations with women and families to increase awareness of the benefit of birth after 39 weeks.

Across the National Collaborative services, we have so far seen an 8% reduction in births before 39 weeks. View the Let's Talk Timing of Birth booklet [here](#).

Cervical length measurement and progesterone prescription

Teams have been working with ultrasound providers and developing local systems to ensure that cervical length is being measured for all women at their mid pregnancy ultrasound scan.

Following the scan, teams are ensuring there is a reliable process to document the scan and that systems are in place to respond in a timely way if there is a shortened cervix, including prescription of progesterone. We are pleased to see that data shows a 15% improvement across the National Collaborative. View the Alliance's flyer on progesterone use on pregnancy [here](#).

Continuity of Care

One of the most effective strategies in reducing preterm birth, particularly for First Nations women, is providing continuity of care with a known health professional.

The first step for many teams has been collecting data to understand how many women are currently receiving continuity of care and developing local solutions that enable increased access to women with risk factors for early birth.

A particular focus within some clinical services, has been to provide access to Aboriginal lead midwifery continuity of care for First Nations women. At our Brisbane Learning Session, we heard from inspiring First Nations experts about strategies to improve both experiences and outcomes of maternity care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, their families, and communities.

Final learning session goes off with a Brisbane bang!



Brisbane recently played host to the third and final learning session of the Every Week Counts - National Preterm Birth Prevention Collaborative. The two-day learning session featured interactive activities, presentations and shared learning opportunities. Find out more via the button below.

[Read More Here](#)

Understanding the impact of preterm birth prevention for women and families

Teams participating in the National Collaborative are encouraged to listen to the voice of women and families and engage with consumers in the design and delivery of their preterm birth prevention strategies. Barwon Health consumer representative, Jade, recently shared her experience with the Geelong Advertiser, talking about her experience of loss from preterm birth and how the new Barwon Health preterm birth clinic provided her with critical continuity of care and supported the delivery of her healthy daughter Pippa.

[Read more here](#)



Preterm birth prevention for First Nations women

Nationally, approximately 14% of babies born to First Nations mothers are preterm, compared with 8% of babies of non-First Nations mothers. Teams present at the Brisbane learning session had the valuable opportunity to understand more about preterm birth prevention in the Top End from Dr Kiarna Brown, Obstetrician and Gynaecologist Northern Territory Lead of the Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance.

[Read more here](#)

World Prematurity Day Toolkit

Join us in celebrating World Prematurity Day on Friday 17 November 2023 to raise awareness of preterm birth and the impact it has on babies and families. This year, the Every Week Counts National Collaborative has created a suite of resources, including social media graphics, digital banners, factsheets, and media materials, that have capacity to be co-branded for health services wanting to show support.

[View Resources](#)



Every Week Counts National Collaborative Showcase - 19th March 2024

Teams will continue to be supported over the next 6 months to introduce the evidence-based strategies with monthly web conferences and access to improvement advisors and jurisdiction support teams.

Teams will then come together again at the Every Week Counts - National Collaborative Showcase to be held in the Great Hall at Parliament House in Canberra on 19th March 2024.

The Showcase Event will provide an opportunity for participating teams to share their work undertaken and successes achieved. If you would like to find out more about the event, please contact collaborative@wcha.asn.au



Contact Us



Midwifery Group Practice
Face-to-Face Insight Forum
Showcasing innovation & best practice in maternity healthcare

20 - 21 November, 2023
Novotel, Olympic Park, Sydney



WOMEN'S
HEALTHCARE
AUSTRALIA

Register Now

After a 3-year pandemic induced hiatus, WHA is excited to be resuming our annual Midwifery Group Practice Face to Face Insight forum: Showcasing innovation & best practice in maternity healthcare. This Insight Forum offers a rich 2-day multidisciplinary meeting of sharing, learning, and networking, to share insights on common challenges and to learn about successes in meeting the needs of women and their babies in MGP.

Read more here

Looking forward

Being part of a national community of maternity services working together on the same problem at the same time continues to be a powerful motivator.

Over the next nine months, we will have a rich dataset to analyse to assist in telling the story about the success of participating teams in designing local solutions for improving care and outcomes for women and their babies.

Early indications coming through in the data are very encouraging, suggesting significant improvements are being made across the country. Watch this space!

Our Partners



The Every Week Counts National Collaborative is a joint collaboration between the Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance, Women's Healthcare Australasia (WHA), the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and Safer Care Victoria, which is being funded by the Commonwealth Government through the Women's & Infants Research Foundation.

Partner organisations include Women's and Babies Research, Every Week Counts, Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth, Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Australian College of Midwives.

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