

ALSO CONSIDER SEEING

A Doula:

Doulas are non-medical birth companions who are specially trained to provide expert emotional and physical care before, during, or after childbirth. They can prepare you and your partner to advocate for your needs during labor. Because a doula can improve birth outcomes for mother and baby⁴ everyone should have a doula!



Group Prenatal Care:

Receiving prenatal care from your provider in a group of 8-12 women who are due around the same time has been shown to lower stress levels and may reduce risk of preterm birth.⁵ Women spend more time with their provider (about 2 hours at each session), learn together and support each other during pregnancy.



A Midwife:

Midwives are healthcare providers who can provide continuous care throughout your prenatal, labor and delivery, and after birth. They typically spend more one-on-one time with you during labor than an OBGYN. While midwives do not perform C-sections, they can be available for a range of birth experiences, including hospital and home births. You may want to consider asking for a Black midwife.



“ Women of color,
you don’t have to do
this on your own.
You have a village,
and we’re stronger together.”

-Brittany, Mom and
Birth Justice Researcher

Find out more at:
voicesforbirthjustice.org

 @Voices4BirthJustice

This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace the advice of your doctor or other health care provider. We encourage you to discuss any questions or concerns you may have with your provider.

Endnotes

1. Center for Disease Control
2. Collins, 2004

3. McLemore, 2020

4. Gruber, 2013
5. Ickovics, 2003

VOICES FOR BIRTH JUSTICE



Lactation and Infant
Feeding Specialist,
TaNefer Camara

EMPOWER YOUR PREGNANCY

*What to know about Black pregnancy
and premature birth*

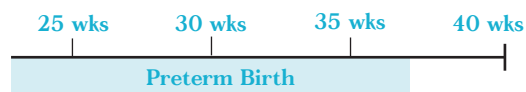


BLACK WOMEN CARRY THE HIGHEST RISK OF PRETERM BIRTH.



The preterm birth rate among Black women is nearly **50%** higher than the rate among other women.¹

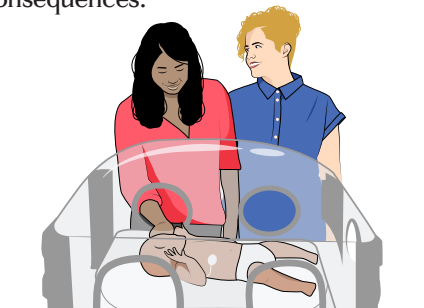
WHAT IS A PREMATURE BIRTH?



A normal pregnancy lasts for 40 weeks. A premature birth (also called preterm birth) is when the baby is born before 37 weeks.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW ABOUT PREMATURE BIRTH?

It's important to understand that a premature birth is rarely caused by something the mother did. The final months and weeks of pregnancy are critical for a baby's development. It's when organs like the brain, lungs, and liver fully develop. Being born too early could lead to lifelong consequences.



WHAT ARE COMMON CAUSES OF PRETERM BIRTH?

- High levels of stress
- Previous preterm births
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Infections
- Diabetes
- Cigarette, alcohol and drug use

If you have any of these issues, it is important that you tell your health care provider.



WHY DO SO MANY BLACK WOMEN HAVE PREMATURE BIRTHS?

Many scientists agree that stress plays a role. Black women experience more chronic stress in their lives than women of other races, in part due to the effects of lifetime exposures to racism in all its form.²



BUT THERE'S HOPE.

There are teams of people committed to helping you have a healthy pregnancy.

DON'T GO IT ALONE.



HERE'S WHERE TO BEGIN: Seek Prenatal Care:

Prenatal care is when you get checkups from a doctor, nurse, or midwife throughout your pregnancy. It should begin as soon as possible after you find out you're pregnant. One study found that women having less than 3 prenatal visits was associated with higher risk of premature birth.³

If you don't already have a prenatal care provider (an obstetrician, midwife or another provider), start by selecting a provider that is suited to your needs. They can tell you about your risk for preterm birth and connect you to other providers and resources.