

Pre-term Surveillance Clinic

This is a specialist clinic which monitors and treats woman who are at higher risk of spontaneous early preterm birth between (24 and 34 weeks of pregnancy) or late miscarriage (pregnancy loss between 14 and 24 weeks pregnancy). The clinic is led by Consultant Obstetrician.

It offers specialised advice to women who have previously experienced a late pregnancy loss or pre-term birth also who are at increased risk of pre-term birth.

Most women are offered an appointment in our clinic after their booking appointment based on the information given to the midwife at booking of GP referral.

Why have I been referred to the clinic?

You will be referred to this clinic early in your pregnancy if:

- You had pregnancy loss between 14 -24 weeks
- You had one or more previous preterm deliveries or late miscarriage before 34 weeks
- You waters broke before 34 weeks in a previous pregnancy
- a short cervix found during a scan in this or a previous pregnancy
- an unusually shaped or abnormal womb
- You had certain types of treatment to your cervix after an abnormal smear (for example cone biopsy, LLETZ)
- you have a cervical cerclage (stitch around the neck of your womb)

If you have one or more of these risk factors, it does not necessarily mean you will have a premature birth or late miscarriage.

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What does the pre-term Surveillance Clinic do?

Our aim is to reduce your chance of premature birth or second trimester miscarriage. We will look at your previous history and the results of the tests you have in the clinic to find out if you are at high risk of it happening again. Sometimes we may think it is useful to monitor you more regularly and we may offer you treatments that reduce the risk of preterm birth.

We will discuss your individual care plan with you at your first visit. You will have an individual care plan because not all treatments are appropriate or effective for all patients. We will also provide you with support and reassurance during what may be an anxious time for you.

It is important to understand that while there is evidence to suggest the surveillance and treatment can reduce your risk, unfortunately, not all miscarriages and preterm births can be prevented.

Appointments at the clinic

The preterm surveillance clinic is held every second Tuesday morning in the Antenatal clinic at Doncaster Royal Infirmary hospital. The phone number for this clinic is 01302 642797.

What tests will I have done?

- We will offer you one or more of these investigations, depending on your risk factors:
- A urine test and/or a vaginal swab to check for infection
- A trans-vaginal scan
- We may offer for you a vaginal swab Fibronectin test (fFN): A negative result on the test means it's highly unlikely that you'll give birth in the next 7-14 days however a positive result, on the other hand means you are at a higher risk of giving birth early, but it doesn't mean that you're about to give birth or deliver early at all. We will discuss and make plan with you in case of positive result outcome.

Do the tests have any risks?

All these tests are safe for you and your baby.

How often do I need to come to clinic?

Our team will discuss this with you at your first visit but we see most our patients about every two weeks between 14 and 24 weeks of pregnancy.

We may decide to see you at the time on anomaly scan after your first visit appointment if you are not in high risk group.

If the results of the monitoring up until you are 24 weeks pregnant suggest that you are not at high risk of having your baby before 34 weeks, we will probably see you one more time in the third trimester and then discharge you if all well.

You will then see your midwife for follow-up appointments.

What treatment will I be offered if I am at moderate or high risk of premature birth or late miscarriage?

These include one or more of the following:

- cervical cerclage, where a stitch is put around the neck of your womb
- progesterone (hormone) suppositories which you put into your vagina
- antibiotics in confirmed infection
- if you are at high risk after 24 weeks of pregnancy, we may offer steroid injections to help your baby's lungs develop
- Magnesium sulphate injection would be offered to you for 'brain protection' for your baby if delivering before 34 weeks of gestation
- You may need transferring to Sheffield if delivery is anticipated before 27 weeks of gestation.

Please contact us immediately if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- either a slow trickle or a gush of clear or pinkish fluid from your vagina or any increase in vaginal discharge
- backache
- cramps like strong period pains
- a frequent need to urinate
- a feeling of pressure in your pelvis
- contractions more often than every 10 minutes
- strong pain, a smelly discharge or bleeding from your vagina
- feeling feverish, sick or have a temperature.

Who can I contact with queries and concerns?

All your queries will be answered by the consultant/senior doctor when you see him/her in the Pre-term Surveillance Clinic. If there is an emergency (labour/leaking/bleeding) and you need to be seen ASAP. Please contact Triage on 01302 642711 or 01302 642712.

Useful supporting groups/websites:

- Tommy's: <https://www.tommys.org/>
- Borne: <https://www.borne.org.uk/>

Telephone: 01302 366666.

Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

The team are available to help with any concerns, complaints or questions you may have about your experience at the Trust. Their office is in the Main Foyer (Gate 4) of Doncaster Royal Infirmary. Contact can be made either in person, by telephone or email.

The contact details are:

Telephone: 01302 642764 or 0800 028 8059

Email: dbth.pals.dbh@nhs.net