

Preterm Labor

Learning Objectives

Review the following Learning Objectives as an organized beginning to your study of this module. As you read the Learning Objectives, note key words which will aid you in finding the information in the texts. When you complete the module, revisit this list and check for areas that require further investigation.

- Define preterm labor.
- Identify the signs and symptoms of preterm labor.
- Identify appropriate consultation and transfer of care to physician for the treatment and response to preterm labor.
- Identify the current theories regarding the causes of preterm labor.
- Identify the predictability and risk factors for preterm labor.
- Identify premature rupture of membranes.
- Identify the screening mechanisms currently utilized for the prevention of preterm labor.
- Compare the current morbidity and mortality statistics for preterm labor with those from a decade ago.
- Understand the current limitations of preventing preterm labor and premature birth.
- Identify the pharmaceutical medications for the treatment of preterm labor.
- Identify the medical sequela for premature infants.
- Identify support measures the midwife can implement when advocating for a client who has given birth to a premature infant.
- Identify “kangaroo care.”
- Identify the role of breastmilk in the care of premature infants.
- Review Ruptured Membranes module.
- Review Pharmacology for Midwives module.
- Create an information/instruction sheet for prevention of preterm labor to give to clients.
- Demonstrate your ability to inform and monitor clients regarding preterm labor, in the context of your preceptor’s practice.
- Draft practice guidelines for the screening of and responding to preterm labor in your own practice.

Preterm Labor, continued

Study Sources

The following texts are recommended for completion of this module. Use them to cross reference and build a more comprehensive understanding.

Using key words from the Learning Objectives, search the index. Read those pages listed, and read the chapter in which they are found. Establish a context for the information so that you understand how other topics are related. In addition, read the chapter headings in the Table of Contents, and flip through each text to familiarize yourself with the content of chapters. As you work through Study Group modules, you will eventually read each text in its entirety.

Holistic Midwifery, Vol. I, Frye

Varney's Midwifery

Myles Textbook for Midwives

Birth Emergency Skills Training, Gruenberg

The Natural Pregnancy Book, Romm

Pharmacotherapeutics, Kuhn

Breastfeeding: A Guide for the Medical Professional, Lawrence & Lawrence

After the Baby's Birth: A Woman's Way to Wellness, Lim

The Baby Book, Sears & Sears

Related Topics

- ◇ Nutrition
- ◇ Hypertension
- ◇ Pre-Eclampsia
- ◇ Grief
- ◇ Charting
- ◇ Uterine Size and EDD Discrepancies
- ◇ Fetal Development
- ◇ Newborn Apnea/Hypoxia/RDS
- ◇ Transporting
- ◇ Post Partum Care

Preterm Labor Questions

1. How is preterm labor defined?
2. Define premature rupture of membranes.
3. What is the weight often designated to determine the prematurity of a newborn?
4. How has our medical research in the last 20 years impacted the rate of premature birth in the U.S.?
5. What are some of the statistics for preterm labor or premature birth?
6. When is the appropriate time to educate clients about preterm labor signs and symptoms?
7. How effective is risk assessment in predicting preterm labor?
8. How frequently is it estimated that infection contributes to preterm labor?
9. Which infections seem to contribute to preterm labor?
10. How may a UTI contribute to preterm labor?
11. List the presently identified risk factors or predisposing factors for preterm labor.
12. What are the routine screening mechanisms currently utilized for the detection and prevention of preterm labor?
13. What is the recommended additional prenatal screening for clients with a history of preterm labor or birth?
14. What are the signs and symptoms of preterm labor?

Continued...

Preterm Labor Questions, continued

15. How frequent are preterm labor contractions?
16. A client phones to report that she's having contractions. What questions must you ask to determine if she is experiencing preterm labor?
17. In the context of preterm labor, when does the midwife involve a physician?
18. List the historic treatments for preterm labor that are no longer recommended because they have not proven to be effective.
19. When are bedrest and external monitoring of uterine activity and FHR patterns recommended?
20. Why is breast stimulation and sexual activity contraindicated during preterm labor risk periods?
21. How long do we anticipate that the current medical interventions can suppress preterm labor?
22. When are the tocolytic medications best indicated?
23. Why are corticosteroids administered during preterm labor?
24. What decisions must be made when preterm labor is progressing?
25. What is "kangaroo care?"

Essay

1. Describe the challenges faced by a premature infant and his/her family.
2. Describe the benefits of breastmilk for premature infants.
3. Describe the midwife's role in instances of progressive preterm labor and premature birth.

Continued...

Preterm Labor Questions, continued

Projects (send completed projects with the rest of your course work for this module)

1. Choose a book about the parenting of premature infants to recommend to your clients. Write a review about your recommendation, include title, author, publisher and date of publication.
2. Research local and national support resources for families with premature infants. Make a referral list to keep on hand.
3. Create an information/instruction sheet for prevention of preterm labor to give to clients.
4. Draft practice guidelines for the screening of and responding to preterm labor in your own practice. Include reference to your client education plan, your physician consultation and referral plan, and your continued midwifery care of a client with preterm labor and/or premature baby. Submit this draft and include it later in your Practice Guidelines projects (in the Charting and Practice Guidelines Module.)

Skills

Following are excerpts from the NMI forms for assessment of midwifery skills, which include all skills identified and required by NARM. Review the following skills and consider how they each relate to the content of this module. If you are currently working with a preceptor, take this opportunity to focus on these areas. During Supervised Primary Care you will formally evaluate these skills together using the NMI form *Preceptor Evaluation/Student Self-Assessment of Midwifery Skills*.

3. Maternal Health Assessment:

K. Recognizes and responds to potential prenatal complications by:

8. Identifying and dealing with pre-term labor with:

a) Referral

B) Consultation and/or treatment including:

- 1) Increase of fluids,
- 2) Non-allopathic remedies,
- 3) Discussion of the mother's fears,
- 4) Food to be eaten at least every two hours,
- 5) consumption of alcoholic beverage,
- 6) Evaluation of urinary tract infection,
- 7) Evaluation of maternal infection
- 8) Bed rest,
- 9) Pelvic rest (including nursing previous baby),
- 10) No breast stimulation (including nursing previous baby)