

PRETERM LABOUR

MODULE 7

Preterm labour is any labour that starts before 37 completed weeks of pregnancy. Preterm labour can lead to a preterm birth. The earlier a baby is born the more likely he or she could have long-term health problems. Some preterm babies are very small and may not be strong enough to live. Any woman can go into preterm labour but those most at risk are:

- Having their first baby;
- Have had a preterm baby before;
- Smoke;
- Are underweight;
- Are not getting enough healthy food;
- Have a lot of stress in their life;
- Have a vaginal or bladder infection;
- Have had a previous abortion.

It is not always easy for a woman to tell if she is in preterm labour. You should watch for these signs:

- Bleeding from the vagina;
- Contractions of the uterus;
- A sudden gush or a constant slow leak of fluid from the vagina.

Or a change in what you normally feel with:

- Low dull back ache;
- Pelvic pressure;
- Increase in discharge from the vagina.

If you experience any of the above signs after the 20th week and before the 37th week of pregnancy **DO NOT WAIT!** The best thing for you and your baby is for you to **GO RIGHT AWAY TO THE HOSPITAL.**