WHO recommendations on interventions to improve preterm birth outcomes
The primary audience for this guideline includes health-care professionals who are responsible for developing national and local health-care protocols and policies, as well as managers of maternal and child health programmes and policy-makers in all settings. The guideline will also be useful to those directly providing care to pregnant women and preterm infants, such as obstetricians, paediatricians, midwives, nurses and general practitioners. The information in this guideline will be useful for developing job aids and tools for pre- and in-service training of health workers to enhance their delivery of maternal and neonatal care relating to preterm birth.

**Recommendations**

**Maternal interventions**

**Antenatal corticosteroids to improve newborn outcomes**

- WHO recommendation on antenatal corticosteroid therapy for women at risk of preterm birth from 24 weeks to 34 weeks of gestation
  
Published November 2015

- WHO recommendation on antenatal corticosteroid administration when preterm birth is considered imminent within 7 days of starting treatment, including within the first 24 hours
  
Published November 2015

- WHO recommendation on antenatal corticosteroid therapy for women at risk preterm birth with a single or multiple pregnancy
  
Published November 2015

- WHO recommendation on antenatal corticosteroid therapy in women with preterm prelabour rupture of membranes
  
Published November 2015

- WHO recommendation on antenatal corticosteroid therapy in women with chorioamnionitis at risk of preterm birth
  
Published November 2015

- WHO recommendation on antenatal corticosteroid therapy in women undergoing planned caesarean section at late preterm gestations (34–36+6 weeks)
  
Published November 2015

- WHO recommendation on antenatal corticosteroid therapy in women with hypertensive disorders at risk of preterm birth
WHO recommendation on antenatal corticosteroid therapy for women at risk of preterm birth of a growth-restricted fetus

Published November 2015

WHO recommendation on antenatal corticosteroid therapy for women with pre-gestational and gestational diabetes at risk of preterm birth

Published November 2015

WHO recommendation on use of either dexamethasone or betamethasone as the antenatal corticosteroid of choice

Published November 2015

WHO recommendation on use of a single repeat course of antenatal corticosteroid

Published November 2015

Tocolytics for inhibiting preterm labour

WHO recommendation on the use of tocolytic treatment for inhibiting preterm labour

Published November 2015

Magnesium sulfate for fetal protection against neurological complications

WHO recommendation on the use of magnesium sulfate for fetal protection from neurological complications

Published November 2015

Antibiotics for preterm labour

WHO recommendation on routine antibiotic administration for women in preterm labour with intact amniotic membranes

Published November 2015

WHO recommendation on antibiotic administration for women with preterm prelabour rupture of membranes

Published November 2015

WHO recommendation on the prophylactic antibiotic of choice in women with preterm prelabour rupture of membranes

Published November 2015
Mode of delivery

WHO recommendation on the optimal mode of birth for women in refractory preterm labour
Published November 2015

Newborn interventions

Thermal care for preterm newborns

WHO recommendation on provision of continuous Kangaroo mother care for preterm newborns
Published November 2015

WHO recommendation on intermittent Kangaroo mother care for preterm neonates, if continuous Kangaroo mother care is not possible
Published November 2015

WHO recommendation on provision of care in a thermo-neutral environment for newborns who cannot be given Kangaroo mother care
Published November 2015

WHO recommendation on effectiveness of plastic bags/wraps in providing thermal care for preterm newborns immediately after birth
Published November 2015

Continuous positive airway pressure for newborns with respiratory distress syndrome

WHO recommendation on continuous positive airway pressure therapy for the treatment of preterm newborns with respiratory distress syndrome
Published November 2015

WHO recommendation on the time for starting continuous positive airway pressure therapy for newborns with respiratory distress syndrome
Published November 2015

Surfactant administration for newborns with respiratory distress syndrome

WHO recommendation on surfactant replacement therapy for newborns with respiratory distress syndrome
Published November 2015
WHO recommendation on the type of surfactant for surfactant replacement therapy in newborns with respiratory distress syndrome

Published November 2015

WHO recommendation on the prophylactic administration of surfactant in preterm newborns

Published November 2015

WHO recommendation on the early administration of surfactant in intubated preterm newborns with respiratory distress syndrome

Published November 2015

Oxygen therapy and concentration for preterm newborns

WHO recommendation on oxygen therapy for preterm newborns

Published November 2015

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