

What is progesterone?

Progesterone is a hormone that occurs naturally in the body; made by the ovaries, adrenal glands, and the placenta when a woman is pregnant.

What is progesterone's role in pregnancy?

Progesterone helps maintain a supportive environment in your body for your developing baby by keeping the uterine muscles relaxed, helping your immune system support your growing baby and encouraging the growth of milk-producing glands in your breasts. Progesterone may reduce inflammation causing preterm rupture of membranes.

What is progesterone therapy used for?

For people who have a history of preterm delivery (at less than 34.6 weeks) due to preterm labor or having their water break early, there is an increased risk for having a preterm delivery in subsequent pregnancies.

Progesterone therapy is used to help decrease the risk of another preterm delivery. Progesterone is given by a weekly injection from 16 to 36 weeks of pregnancy.

Measuring the length of the cervix using a vaginal ultrasound can help predict people who are at an increased risk of an early delivery. This ultrasound is done every 2 weeks from 16 to 24 weeks.

Progesterone may also be prescribed vaginally for women with a shortened cervix, which also can be a risk factor for preterm birth.

How often do I have to come to the clinic?

Progesterone injections are given one time per week starting 16 weeks of pregnancy through 36 weeks of pregnancy. Some patients' partners can be trained to give progesterone injections.

What are the benefits of progesterone therapy?

Progesterone injections have shown to reduce the risks of prematurity, including a NICU stay, poor feeding, respiratory distress, jaundice, infections, and brain hemorrhages, effects on development.

Babies who are born early have an increased risk of jaundice, difficulty eating, and infections (in the blood stream and around the brain and spinal cord). For babies that are born very early (less than 34 weeks) there is also an increased risk of breathing problems and poor lung development, bleeding in the brain, and vision loss.

What are the risks of progesterone therapy?

The main risk of progesterone is missing an injection or stopping injections before 36 weeks. Stopping progesterone early can lead to an increased risk of preterm delivery.

You should not receive progesterone injections if you have a hormone sensitive cancer, liver disease, or uncontrolled hypertension. Side effects may include: injection site irritation or reaction, mood changes, skin changes, nausea.

Make sure you understand the risks & benefits of progesterone Therapy in Pregnancy & ask questions if you have them.