

# PRETERM BIRTH:

## A Global issue



Every year<sup>1</sup>

# 15 million

babies are born prematurely



that's



# 29

babies a minute

## WHAT IS PRETERM BIRTH?

Preterm is defined as babies born before 37 weeks of pregnancy.<sup>1</sup>



Even babies born just a few weeks early have higher rates of hospitalisation and illness than full-term infants.<sup>2</sup>

## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?

Every year,

# 3.1 million new born babies die.

Complications of preterm birth are responsible for over a third of these deaths.<sup>3</sup>

Preterm birth can also have serious long-term consequences. Some of these include:<sup>4</sup>



Visual and hearing impairments



Neurodevelopmental disabilities



Long term cardiovascular and non-communicable diseases



Chronic lung disease

## WHAT CAUSES PRETERM BIRTH?

In about half of all premature births, the cause is unknown.

However, some of the most common known risk factors for premature birth are:<sup>5-11</sup>



A previous preterm birth



Short intervals between pregnancies



Advanced maternal age



Infections, such as intrauterine infections and bacterial vaginosis



Chronic disease, such as diabetes



Extremely low maternal body mass index (BMI)



Smoking or drug use during pregnancy



Preeclampsia

**Preeclampsia<sup>11,12</sup>**  
Preeclampsia is a rapidly progressive condition characterized by high blood pressure and the presence of protein in the urine. It affects at least **5% of all pregnancies.**

**20%** of all preterm births worldwide are associated with preeclampsia.



**A multiple pregnancy** is another risk factor,

with nearly **60%** of twins born preterm.<sup>5</sup>

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## CHALLENGES



**A growing global problem**

62 out of 65 countries with reliable data report increased rates over the past 20 years.<sup>4</sup>



**Disparities in care**

Over 90% of extremely preterm babies in low-income countries die within the first few days, it's less than 10% of babies in high-income settings.<sup>1</sup>



**Access & Awareness**

Women in remote areas in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia are the least likely to receive adequate healthcare during pregnancy and childbirth.<sup>14</sup>



**Translating understanding into treatment**

Because of the many factors affecting two patients – mother and baby – preterm birth is difficult to predict and R&D can be challenging.

## FERRING AND PRETERM BIRTH



**1/3 of our research and development investment goes towards finding innovative treatments to help mothers and babies, from conception to birth.**

Already our treatments have helped many thousands of women at risk of delivering prematurely.

## What we're researching now

Our scientists are working to:



Better understand the causes of preterm birth



Find solutions to address preeclampsia



Explore how changes in vaginal microflora could be associated with preterm labour

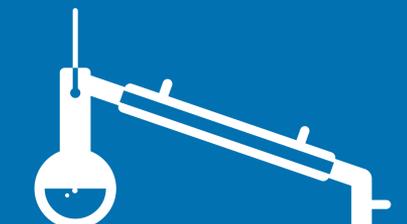
**Breast milk is especially important for premature babies,<sup>13</sup>**

but preterm birth means that some mums' bodies are not yet ready to breastfeed. We have an active R&D programme focused on this issue.



## SOLVING THE MYSTERY OF PRETERM BIRTH, TOGETHER

Ferring has committed \$10 million to support the network of March of Dimes Prematurity Research Centers that are discovering the biological causes of premature birth. Included in Ferring's contribution is funding for a new European-based Prematurity Center.



Find out more about our work: [www.ferring.com](http://www.ferring.com)

### Sources

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