

Pre-term Babies and Magnesium Sulphate

Why is preterm birth (before 32-34 weeks) a risky time?

- When babies are born preterm, their brain is not fully grown.
- Babies born before 32-34 weeks may be at risk for cerebral palsy as a result of the brain not being fully grown. Cerebral palsy may affect behaviour, learning, movement, speaking, hearing or sight.
- Doctors cannot be sure if babies have cerebral palsy until they are almost 2 years old. You cannot tell at birth that a baby has cerebral palsy.

How can we try to prevent cerebral palsy?

- **Magnesium sulphate** is a medicine that can decrease your baby's risk of cerebral palsy.
- Research shows preterm babies have a lower risk of cerebral palsy if their mothers have magnesium sulphate.
- If you are going to give birth before 34 weeks of pregnancy, you may be offered magnesium sulphate. It is given by intravenous (IV) during labour or before a Caesarean section. A nurse or doctor will then monitor you. Magnesium sulphate does not harm your baby. The medicine is stopped when your baby is born.
- Babies born before 34 weeks usually need to be cared for in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. The magnesium sulphate does NOT increase the chance that your baby will need intensive care.



You may feel some or all of these minor side effects when you are receiving magnesium sulphate:

- Skin may feel flushed (warm and red)
- Feel faint or lightheaded
- Mouth may taste like metal
- Feel like throwing up
- Sweat more than normal
- Heart feels like it is pounding

If you do have any of these side effects, they will last for only a short period of time.

<p>Developed by the MAG-CP Collaborative Group for the Canadian Perinatal Network (CPN).</p>		<p>Funded by:</p>			
					