

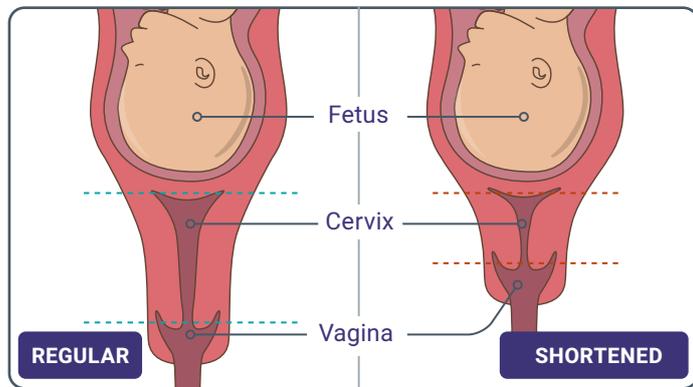


Shortened cervical length

Patient information

What is a cervix?

A cervix connects the vagina and uterus. It dilates when a woman starts labour for childbirth. In pregnancy between 16-22 weeks gestation, a cervix should be greater than >35mm on a transabdominal (external) ultrasound.



Why was a transvaginal ultrasound required?

If a cervix measures less than <35mm on an external ultrasound, a transvaginal (internal) ultrasound is required to ensure accuracy of measurement. Studies have shown there can be a 10mm difference between internal and external ultrasounds. A cervix is only considered "shortened" if it is less than <25mm on an internal ultrasound.

Why does a shortened cervix matter?

A shortened cervix on an internal ultrasound between 16-22 weeks gestation is a risk factor for pre-term birth (born before 37 weeks gestation).

What happens next?

Discuss your care with your GP or maternity care provider. While it is not possible to prevent all preterm births, there are treatments that may help.

Progesterone is a small tablet which is inserted into the vagina each evening and is often effective in reducing the shortening of your cervix. However, if your cervix continues to shorten, a cervical cerclage (small stitch) may be necessary.

If you experience any spotting, any fluid coming from the vagina or contractions, contact your maternity care provider or delivery hospital immediately.

For further information, scan the QR code for the Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance (APBPA) www.pretermalliance.com.au.



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