

## **Knowing the Signs of Premature Labor**

Be prepared. Know the warning signs and know what to do.

### **What is premature labor?<sup>1</sup>**

This term refers to labor you go into before 37 weeks of pregnancy, or three or more weeks before your due date. Babies born this early may have serious health problems.

### **Are you at risk?<sup>2</sup>**

Women most likely to have an early birth are those who:

- Have had previous premature labor or delivery.
- Expect twins, triplets or more.
- Smoke, drink or use drugs while pregnant.
- Have urinary tract infections (UTIs), vaginal infections or sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Have diabetes, high blood pressure or blood clotting disorders.
- Lack care or get late care while pregnant.<sup>3</sup>
- Are victims of domestic abuse.
- Stand for long periods of time or work long hours.
- Are stressed.
- Are severely overweight.
- Were underweight before pregnancy.
- Are African-American.
- Are younger than 17 or older than 35.

### **Know the warning signs.<sup>4</sup>**

If you have just one of these warning signs, call your doctor or go to the hospital right away:

- Contractions (when your stomach tightens) every 10 minutes, or three or more in 30 minutes
- Pelvic pressure that feels like your baby is pushing down
- Backache below your waist, right above your tailbone
- Increased vaginal discharge that has clear, pink or brown fluid or blood
- Cramps that feel like you're on your period
- Stomach cramps with or without diarrhea



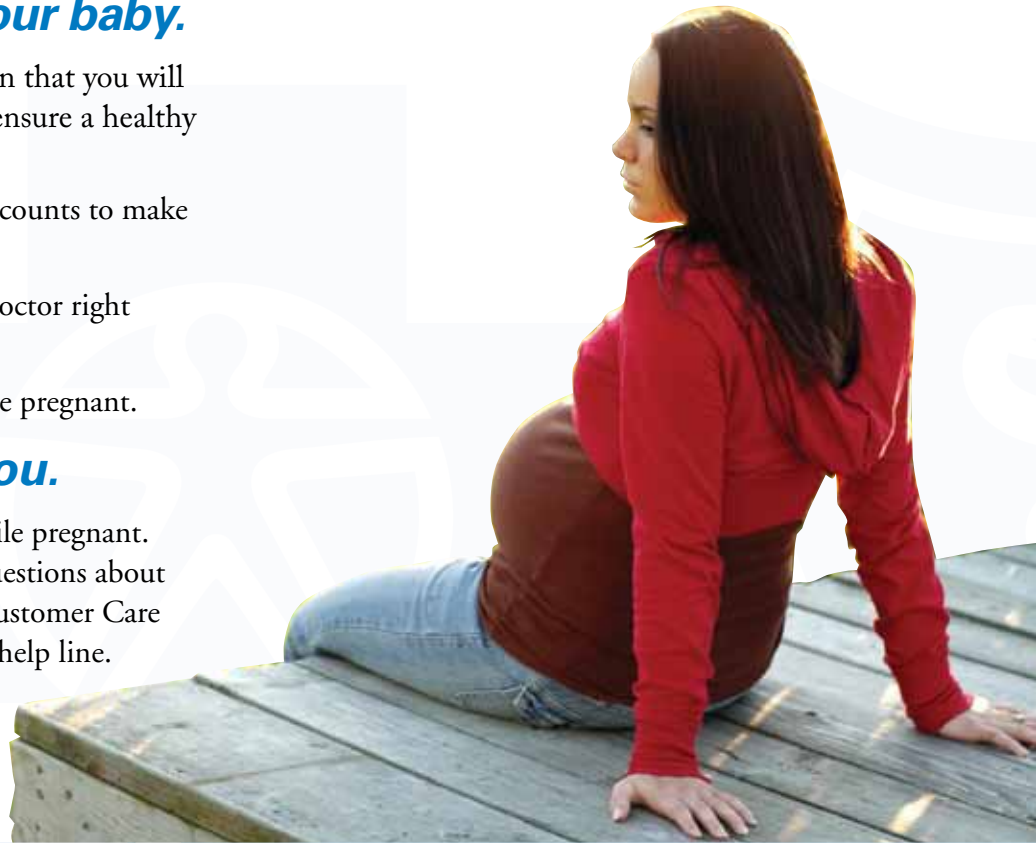
## ***Protect yourself and your baby.***

Just because you are at risk doesn't mean that you will go into premature labor. Take steps to ensure a healthy birth:

- Ask your doctor or nurse about kick counts to make sure your baby is moving.<sup>5</sup>
- Know the warning signs. Call your doctor right away if you have any signs.<sup>6</sup>
- Take care of your health while you are pregnant.

## ***We are here to help you.***

Be sure to go to all of your checkups while pregnant. Your doctor or nurse can answer your questions about premature labor. You also can call our Customer Care Center or MedCall®, the 24-hour nurse help line.



### **BlueChoice HealthPlan Medicaid**

Customer Care Center: **1-866-781-5094**

TTY line: **1-866-773-9634**

MedCall: **1-866-577-9710**

TTY line: **1-800-368-4424**

**[www.bluechoicescmedicaid.com](http://www.bluechoicescmedicaid.com)**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):  
**1-800-232-4636**

TTY lines are only for members with hearing and speech loss.



Medicaid

Sources: <sup>1,2,4,6</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC Features Premature Birth (Accessed August 2009): <http://www.cdc.gov/features/pretermbirth/>

<sup>3</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), PRAMS and Preterm Delivery (Accessed, August 2009): <http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/ProductsPubs/PDFs/Preterm%20Delivery%20FS.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>PubMed, Methods of Fetal Movement Counting and the Detection of Fetal Compromise in Obstet Gynaecol 2008 Feb;28 (2):147-154 (Accessed August 2009): [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18393008?logS=activity](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18393008?logS=activity)

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