



Cervical Length Measurement

A Vital Tool in Reducing Preterm Birth in Ohio

PROBLEM

Preterm birth is the leading cause of newborn death in Ohio.

RISK FACTORS

Pregnant women with a previous spontaneous preterm birth or with a short cervix in their current pregnancy.

SOLUTION

Progesterone, a treatment backed by national guidelines from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) can reduce the risk of preterm birth by 30% for women with either a previous spontaneous preterm birth or a short cervix. Progesterone should be part of the solution, along with smoking cessation and other traditional efforts, to reduce prematurity.

CONCLUSION

Identifying pregnant women at risk for preterm birth who are candidates for progesterone treatment requires the use of transvaginal ultrasound (TVU) to measure cervical length. Standardized sonographer training in TVU is essential to determine accuracy of the cervical length measurement to estimate—and reduce—the risk of preterm birth.

Risks for Preterm Birth

- Previous preterm birth or miscarriage
- Short cervix
- African American/Black
- Pregnant with twins or triplets
- Infections during pregnancy
- Very overweight or underweight
- Smoking, poor diet or stress
- Gum disease or certain other health problems

To improve Ohio infant mortality rates, the Ohio Perinatal Quality Collaborative (OPQC)—a statewide, multi-stakeholder network that has worked to improve perinatal health in Ohio since 2007—is working to reduce the rate of preterm births in Ohio by 10% by July 1, 2016.



Transvaginal Ultrasound (TVU): A Breakthrough in Preterm Birth Prevention

Ohio has fallen to 47th of 50 states in infant mortality, fueled by high preterm birth rates. Effective strategies to reduce the incidence of spontaneous preterm birth are now available, including progesterone for women with:

- Prior preterm birth and/or
- A short cervix

Cervical length measurement using TVU during the 2nd term of pregnancy is an important tool for identifying women at risk for preterm birth. ACOG supports the use of TVU to identify women with an increased risk for preterm birth who may benefit from progesterone prophylaxis.

Transvaginal Ultrasound Requires a Level of Technical Expertise

To prevent quality-assurance concerns with cervical ultrasound screenings, it is important that the sonographers on which your practice or clinic depends are properly trained. An improperly performed TVU cervical length measurement can result in unneeded treatment or a missed opportunity to prevent preterm birth. While sonography training often does include the technical details that TVU requires for accurate cervical length measurement, there are additional education and credentialing opportunities available to help sonographers improve their skills.

Improve Accuracy with Cervical Length Accreditation

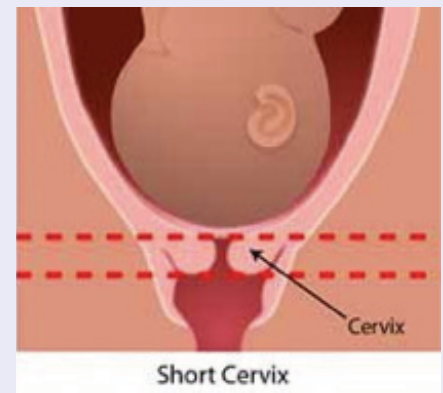
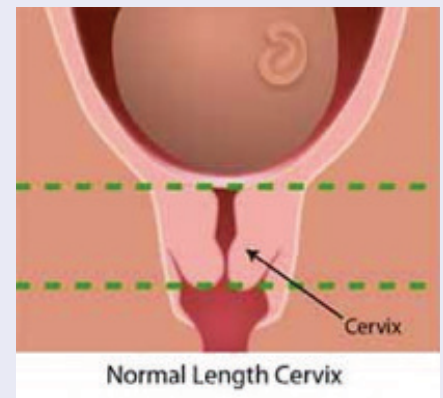
An October 2013 study in the American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology concluded that “increased attention to standardized education and credentials is warranted for persons who perform ultrasound examinations of the cervix in pregnancy.”

It’s important that sonographers are properly trained in cervical length measurement. Two such programs are available through the [Cervical Length Education and Review \(CLEAR\)](#) program and the [Fetal Medicine Foundation \(FMF\)](#).

	Fetal Medicine Foundation (FMF)	Cervical Length Education and Review (CLEAR)
Website	http://www.fetalmedicine.org/cervical-assessment-1	https://clear.perinatalquality.org/
Duration	30 minutes	60 minutes
Cost	Free*	\$150
SDMS CME credits	None	3.0

* Prior Nuchal Translucency (NT) Credential required

Sonographers getting properly trained in cervical length measurement is a critical piece in reducing Ohio’s preterm birth rate by 10% by July 1, 2016.



Source: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development



Watch Hyagriv Simhan, MD, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center’s Magee-Women’s Hospital, explain in a 3-minute video how TVU can help prevent preterm birth at <https://opqc.net/patients-providers/%20Preterm%20Birth%20and%20Prevention>.