



# ANTENATAL CORTICOSTEROIDS

Babies who are born preterm (less than 37 weeks) are at risk for complications related to underdeveloped organs. Complications tend to be more serious when a baby is born at an earlier gestational age.

Some medications, **including corticosteroids**, can be given to help reduce or prevent certain conditions related to preterm birth. More information about preterm birth is listed in further detail in the pre-term birth handout.

Corticosteroids, such as betamethasone and dexamethasone, are an intramuscular injection medicine given to a pregnant person if **preterm birth is expected within the next 7 days**.

The benefit of corticosteroids decreases as gestational age of delivery increases and corticosteroid use is typically reserved for a person whose delivery is predicted to happen at less than 34 weeks gestational age.

**Corticosteroids have been shown to decrease the risk of perinatal death, respiratory (lung) distress syndrome, intraventricular hemorrhage (brain bleeding), and necrotizing enterocolitis (a bowel issue).**

**When administered appropriately, benefits of corticosteroids outweigh potential, but poorly-understood, risks.**



Timing of the corticosteroids is very important as the biggest benefit for the baby is when the first dose is given **2-7 days before birth!**



Steroid	Dosing
Betamethasone	12mg doses of betamethasone will be given by <b>intramuscular injection</b> . There will be <b>2 doses</b> ; the doses will be given 24 hours apart.
Dexamethasone	6mg doses of dexamethasone will be given by <b>intramuscular injection</b> . There will be <b>4 doses</b> ; the doses will be given 12 hours apart.

## References

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