

World Prematurity Day – November 17, 2019

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November 17,
2019



What is World Prematurity Day?

On November 17 we take a moment to show compassion and support for families who are experiencing the anxiety of premature births by observing World Prematurity Day, created by the March of Dimes. We love our babies from the moment they're born. World Prematurity Day reminds us of babies born too early and the health challenges they can face as they grow up. These little ones need loads of love and support and World Prematurity Day is a chance to show it.

History of World Prematurity Day

World Prematurity Day was created on November 17, 2011 to raise awareness for the millions of children every year who are born prematurely. While technologies and medical procedures in America have increased over the years, preterm babies still carry a huge vulnerability to develop cerebral palsy, delays in development, hearing problems,

and sight problems.

Additionally, while neonatal death in the United States is low in comparison to most of the world, premature births account for a quarter of all neonatal deaths.

That's part of the many reasons why World Prematurity Day was created – to shine a light on the risk and hardships created by premature births, cost-effective and proven solutions, and spreading compassion for families who have experienced premature births.

That being said, many premature babies grow up to completely healthy individuals, with some even becoming notable public figures such as Winston Churchill and Albert Einstein.

World Prematurity Day related holidays

National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day

The loss of an infant is devastating. National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day honors those lives lost to miscarriage, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, stillbirth, the death of a newborn, and more. On October 15, take the opportunity to reflect, honor, and come together over pregnancy and infant loss. If...



National Women's Health Week

Stay active. Eat healthy. And get some sleep! Most important? Start today. The federal government's Office on Women's Health created National Women's Health Week as a way to encourage all women to make the choices which are right for them. Women have unique health issues such as pregnancy and menopause. And...



National Breastfeeding Month

Like all mammals, human mothers are blessed with the ability to produce and feed their babies milk. Breast milk has always held great cultural significance; the ancient Greeks believed that the Milky Way galaxy was formed by a swirl of the goddess Hera's breastmilk (and that the breastmilk of a...



[>> Full list of holidays in November](#)

World Prematurity Day timeline

2012

"Strong Start" Promoted Healthy Babies

"Strong Start," a collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and a national group of obstetricians and gynecologists, supported the March of Dimes' campaign urging the public to avoid scheduling a medically unnecessary delivery prior to 39 weeks of pregnancy.

2008

The March of Dimes Created the Preemie Act

The Preemie Act, launched by the March of Dimes, became law in 2006 — requesting federal support for lifesaving research and education about babies born too early.

The 1990s

Strides in technology improved prematurity

The decade reflected many achievements in successfully treating premature infants born as early as 23 weeks and weighing just over a pound.

The 1980s

Family First

This decade saw many family-centered changes in how to help premature babies — including parental rooming-in policies in hospitals, and older children allowing to help in the infants' care.

World Prematurity Day FAQs

Can preemies have babies?

A preemie is a baby so, no, a preemie can not have a baby. But as an adult, sure, there's no reason why simply being a preemie would prevent you from conceiving.

What is the ribbon color for premature babies?

To show support for World Prematurity Day individuals show wear purple ribbons. It's totally your color, BTW.

What qualifies as a premature baby?

Any birth that takes place three weeks or more before the baby's due date is a premature birth.

What month is the March of Dimes?

The March of Dimes month is held every November.

How to Observe World Prematurity Day

1. Post pictures on social media

Many people have never seen a premature baby. You can make a difference by posting pictures of preemies on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. It may be unnerving to see such tiny human beings with tubes coming out of their mouths or in incubators. But it's an important way to put the problem of premature babies front and center. Your pic could just start a movement.

2. Give a care package

Many organizations sponsor care packages for preemies. These gifts contain tiny diapers, bottles, blankets, and in many cases, doll-sized clothes. Some hospitals also provide these packages without charge to families with babies weighing less than three pounds. Or, just go out and buy some things and share them with a new mother.

3. Pull out the purple

Purple is the official color for National World Prematurity Day. Wear your purple ribbon pin or even get a purple ribbon tattoo. Light your home or office with a purple bulb. Whatever way you can show your support empowers the families who are struggling to keep a premature baby alive. It's a way to do your part to educate and sensitize the community to this unfortunate problem that can affect any one of us.

5 Things To Give You Pause Over Premature Births

1. It's why full-term pregnancies are important

Did you know that the brain, lungs and other organs don't develop until the last few weeks of pregnancy?

2. It's an uphill battle

Each year one in ten American births result in infant mortality.

3. Preemies can grow up to be famous

Many famous historical figures were born prematurely including physicist Albert Einstein, writer Mark Twain, political leader Winston Churchill, French author Victor Hugo, the emperor Napoleon, and scientist Isaac Newton.

4. It produces powerful mother's milk

One interesting thing happens to mothers who deliver premature babies; the milk mothers produce contains special properties including extra minerals, fat, and proteins that these tiny infants need.

5. Gender plays a role

Boys are more likely than girls to be born prematurely due to a outsized risk of high blood pressure and placenta abnormalities in the mothers.

Why World Prematurity Day is Important

1. Premature births are increasing in the U.S.

Every year the March of Dimes issues a report card that assesses the efforts to reduce premature births in the U.S. Unfortunately, our country is losing ground in this battle for healthy babies. In fact, our overall grade is a "C" — showing a widening gulf of differences in survival rates depending on racial background and socioeconomic conditions of the mothers. The best grades go to states in the west and northwest and failing grades go to states in the southwest and southeast.

2. There's more than one kind of premature birth

When we speak in general terms about premature babies, we tend to dismiss the variety of premature births that occur. A late preterm baby is born sometime between 34 and 37 weeks of a pregnancy. An actual preemie is a still developing infant born just under 32 weeks of gestation. The tiniest of all babies is a micro-preemie, born at under 25 weeks into a pregnancy and weighing about a pound.

3. Premature births carry high risks

According to the March of Dimes, the number one global cause of death in children under five years old is premature births. When infants are born prematurely, they can face health challenges affecting their brain, lungs, hearing or vision. Risk factors include being African-American, a teen mother, a woman over 35, and coming from a low-income background. World Prematurity Day raises our consciousness about these infants so that we provide better research for healthier pregnancies and babies.

Year	Date	Day
2019	November 17	Sunday
2020	November 17	Tuesday
2021	November 17	Wednesday
2022	November 17	Thursday
2023	November 17	Friday

World Prematurity Day dates