



gapps

an initiative of Seattle Children's

GLOBAL ALLIANCE TO PREVENT  
PREMATURITY AND STILLBIRTH

## GLOBAL PRETERM BIRTH FACTS

### A Quick Look at the Numbers

- More than 1 million babies die from preterm birth in the first month of life. Many who survive suffer serious health problems.
- Preterm Birth is the leading cause (28%) of all deaths in the first month of life.
- Unpublished data from the World Health Organization estimate about **13 million** babies are born preterm, or before 37 weeks gestation, each year.
- U.S. costs related to preterm birth exceed **\$26 billion**.

### What is Preterm Birth or Prematurity?

According to the World Health Organization, premature labor is indicated by the onset of labor before 37 completed weeks of gestation (full term is about 40 weeks). The U.S. Centers for Disease Control defines premature birth as a birth that is at least three weeks before a baby's due date. It is also known as premature birth or prematurity.

### What Happens if a Baby is Born too Early?

Without the full time to grow and develop, many babies who survive premature birth have increased risks for death, infections, cerebral palsy, brain injury, and respiratory, vision, hearing, learning and development problems.

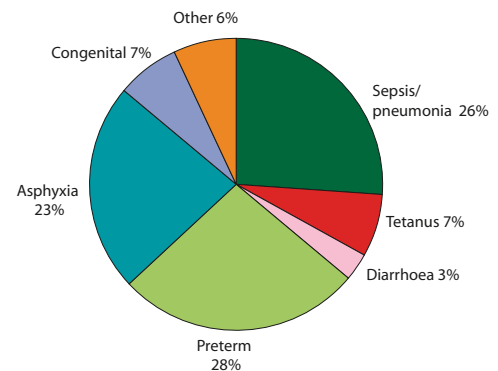
### What Areas of the World are Most Affected by Preterm Birth?

Rates continue to rise in low-, middle- and high-income countries. In the United States significant disparities persist. Rates among blacks and Native Americans rival those in low-income countries.

### How does Preterm Birth Compare with Other Causes of Neonatal Death?

The chart on the right shows the most common causes of neonatal mortality, which is a death that occurs in the first month after birth. Preterm birth is a direct cause of 28% of all neonatal deaths. It is the largest contributor to global neonatal deaths.

### Common Causes of Neonatal Mortality



Source: Lawn, Cousens, Wilczynska and the CHERG neonatal group. Based on vital registration data for 45 countries (96,797 neonatal deaths) and estimates for 147 countries using models based on the vital registration data and on 56 studies (29 countries, 13,685 neonatal deaths).

