



## Preterm Birth and the Lungs

- Being born prematurely can impact your child's lungs throughout their life.
- Babies and young children born early can become sick more often and for longer than others.
- Some children can have breathing issues like wheeze or cough.
- Your child might have lower lung function in childhood compared to their peers born at term.
- Some children born early have a higher risk of lung disease in adulthood.
- These risks can increase if your child was born earlier than 34 weeks gestation.



## Future Health

- Your child might need to attend a specialist clinic throughout their life for lung-function testing, monitoring or a personalised management plan.
- You can request a specialist referral to your hospital's Respiratory Clinic from your Doctor.
- Researchers at The Kids are looking to better understand the lung health of people born preterm. Consider opportunities to participate that might be right for your child.

# Preterm Lung Health for Families with Children & Adolescents



## When Visiting A Health Service

- When visiting a new health care professional make sure to tell them your child was born preterm and their gestational age, because it might change the way they manage your child.
- It's important health care professionals look at the big picture when thinking about your child's health as they may have additional health challenges alongside their lung issues.
- Some medications can reduce symptoms like wheeze and cough in some people, but it is important to find the ones that work for your child.





## **Protecting the Lungs**

In the early years try to avoid illness in your community and protect your baby from people who are unwell. Avoid people who are sick; have high levels of hand hygiene; consider options for childcare.

Make sure your child has all their vaccinations.

Your child's lungs are more vulnerable than other children's so it's important to avoid irritants like smoking, vaping and environmental hazards.

Some hazards you may not think of: silica; high dust levels; chemicals; bushfire smoke; mould; air pollution.

Learn to spot symptoms of asthma and breathing issues in your child and seek help promptly.

Encourage exercise and be mindful of yours and your child's wellbeing.