CPNI
Cyprus Paediatric Neurology Institute
Παιδονευρολογικό Ινστιτούτο Κύπρου

LEAFLET FOR PARENTS AND PATIENTS

Babies born prematurely: development and follow-up

Most babies born early grow up healthy, but being born prematurely can increase the chance of difficulties with movement, learning, vision, hearing or behaviour. Regular follow-up means that any difficulties are found early, when support helps most.

Corrected age

Until about 2 years of age, we use your baby's corrected age: their age from birth minus the number of weeks they were born early. For example, a baby born 8 weeks early is expected, at 6 months old, to do what a 4-month-old baby does.

Which babies need follow-up

- Babies born before 32 weeks, or weighing less than 1.5 kg
- Babies who had a bleed or injury in the brain on their scans
- Babies who needed long breathing support, or had serious infections or surgery
- Babies who had seizures, feeding difficulties or unusual movements as newborns

What we check

- Movement, muscle tone and early movement patterns in the first months
- Development: movement, hand skills, language, play and social skills
- Growth and head size
- Vision and hearing, together with eye and hearing specialists
- Feeding and sleep

Possible difficulties

Most premature babies do not have these difficulties, but we look out for:

- ✓ Signs of cerebral palsy, which are more likely in babies born very early
- ✓ Developmental delay, including speech and language delay
- ✓ Learning, attention and coordination difficulties at school age
- ✓ Vision problems, including retinopathy of prematurity, and hearing loss
- ✓ Epilepsy, less commonly

Early support

- ✓ Physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy when needed
- ✓ Early intervention, which works best when started early
- ✓ We work closely with neonatologists, paediatricians and therapists
- ✓ Regular reviews to track progress

How you can help at home

- ✓ Spend time face to face with your baby: talk, sing and read together
- ✓ Give tummy time when your baby is awake and supervised
- ✓ Play on the floor to encourage movement
- ✓ Follow your baby's lead and celebrate small steps
- ✓ Keep follow-up and vaccination appointments

When to seek advice promptly

Please contact us or your doctor soon if your baby:

- Seems very stiff or very floppy
- Uses one hand much more than the other before 12 months of age
- Does not follow faces or respond to sounds
- Loses skills they had before
- Has jerks, stiffening or unusual movements that could be seizures
- Feeds very poorly or is not gaining weight

Notes for your appointment

Write down what you notice and any questions, and bring this to your appointment.

Date	What I noticed	Questions to ask

Contact CPNI

Would you like a developmental review for a baby born prematurely? Call our office on +357 22 476 627, or email cpni2007@gmail.com. We see children through GeSY, and privately if they are not GeSY beneficiaries, in Nicosia and Limassol.

More leaflets and information: www.cpni.com.cy

This leaflet gives general information. It does not replace advice from your child's doctor.

Reviewed by Dr Paola Nicolaides, Consultant Paediatric Neurologist, November 2026.

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