

Understanding Premature Infant Lungs

If your baby was born early, you already know how fragile preemie lungs can be.

PRETERM LUNGS



24–35 WEEKS
GESTATIONAL AGE

TERM LUNGS



36 WEEKS GESTATIONAL AGE
TO **3** YEARS OF AGE

Adapted from Moore and Persaud 2003¹

Babies born early have lungs that are smaller and less developed at birth than those of full-term babies.

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Premature birth interrupts the final stages of normal lung development.

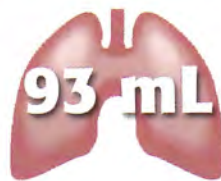


Lung Volume (mL) at Birth²

FULL-TERM



34 WEEKS' Gestational Age



52%
of the lung
volume seen
in full-term
infants

- Premie lung volume is only about half of the lung volume seen in full-term infants.
- A preemie's airways are smaller and more narrow than a full-term baby's airways.
- Babies born early (before the 36th week of pregnancy) have not received the full transfer of maternal antibodies to protect them against severe RSV disease.³
- Even as your premature infant starts to look healthy and strong, babies born early are at high risk for severe RSV disease, in part due to underdeveloped lungs.
- For babies born early, RSV disease could lead to serious lung infections, like pneumonia and bronchiolitis.

¹ Moore KL, Persaud TVN. *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology*. 7th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Saunders; 2003:245-251.

² Langston C, Kida K, Reed M, et al. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1984;129:607-613.

³ Yeung CY, Hobbs JR. *Lancet*. 1968;1:1167-1170.

This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to substitute for professional medical advice. Always consult with a healthcare professional if you have any questions about the health of your child.

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