

# NHS to offer £1 pill that can prevent cerebral palsy in babies

◆ A pill costing £1 that can help prevent premature babies from developing cerebral palsy is to be offered across the NHS.

From 2020, it could benefit 300 newborns a year. One in every 400 babies in the UK is born with a type of cerebral palsy,

a condition involving muscle co-ordination and other disabilities.

Magnesium sulphate can reduce the chance of babies developing the condition by around 30 per cent, when given to women who are about to go into premature labour if they are under 30

weeks, NHS England said.

For babies born at less than 28 weeks, the cerebral palsy risk is one in 10. For those born at full term, the risk falls to 1 in 1000. Dr Pat O'Brien, of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, said: "The medicine crosses the

placenta and gets to the baby's brain. Within the brain, it seems to stabilise cells." The pill will be offered to mothers between 24 and 30 weeks of pregnancy who are either in preterm labour or planning on having a preterm birth within 24 hours.

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