

# Pre-hospital management of babies born extremely preterm: A Framework for Practice.

## Assessment

- **Prioritise maternal health:** Is the mother stable?
- If possible, **establish gestation to determine pathway.**

## Up to and including 21+6 weeks' gestation: Comfort focused care

### Support parents to provide comfort care and ease their emotional distress

- Encourage parents to provide comfort for their baby if they feel able to
- Where they do not feel able ensure a crew member provides care
- Reassure that occasional gasping or reflex movements of limbs do not indicate distress
- Help parents to give close comfort and cuddling to keep baby warm and secure
  - Skin to skin contact where possible. Plastic bag wrapping is not appropriate
- Facilitate memory making for parents prior to and during conveyance

### Destination

- Prioritise health of the mother

## From 22+0 weeks' gestation, or if gestation is unclear: Survival focused care

### 1. Optimise ambient temperature

Baby will get cold



### 2. Defer cord clamping

60 seconds



### 3. Maintain baby's heat

Place feet-first in a polythene bag up to the neck immediately after birth



Do not dry beforehand

Hat and warm blanket over polythene bag  
Place swaddled baby on a heated mattress if available



### 4. Maintain airway/breathing

Neutral position, gentle stimulation



Airway/breathing support

5 gentle inflation breaths, then ventilation breaths – 30/minute



Preterm face mask, room air

Increasing heart rate best indicator of lung inflation



Do not unwrap baby to reassess

### 5. Chest compression

Not indicated below 24 weeks' gestation



### 6. Consider reorientation of care

Where absent heart rate despite airway support, and destination not imminent



If in doubt, continue ventilation breaths until arrival

### Destination

- Keep mother and baby together if possible
- Priorities are health of the mother and neonatal expertise for the baby
- Labour ward generally preferred over Accident and Emergency department
- Make sure destination aware of imminent arrival and circumstances.

## Communication

Ensure empathetic and honest communication



British Association of  
Perinatal Medicine



Royal College  
of Midwives