Preterm labour

Assessment of Preterm Labour

- Review history
- Assess for signs & symptoms of preterm labour
- Physical examination
- Ultrasound examination
- Speculum examination
- Investigations

**Obstetric**
- Medical
- Surgical
- Social

**Signs & Symptoms**
- Uterine contractions
- Lower abdominal cramping
- Pelvic pressure
- Lower back pain
- Spotting or show

**Maternal examination**
- Vital signs: heart rate, blood pressure, respiratory rate
- O₂ saturation
- Temperature
- Abdominal palpation: pain, rigidity, fetal presentation, size and movement

**Fetal surveillance**
- FHR / CTG
- Fetal growth and wellbeing
- Cervical length

**Exclude**
- PPROM
- See PPROM eHandbook page
- Test for fFN as per local practice: ideally use quantitative testing

**High vaginal swab**
- Low vaginal swab
- MSSU
- FBE
- CRP

**BE ALERT FOR SEPSIS**

- Suspect chorioamnionitis if:
  - Maternal fever > 38 degrees
  - Maternal tachycardia > 100 bpm
  - Maternal tachypnoea > 20 breaths/min
  - Fetal tachycardia > 160 bpm
  - Uterine tenderness
  - Offensive vaginal discharge
  - White cell count >15 x 10⁹/L
  - Elevated CRP

*See Risk Assessment table for factors associated with preterm birth*