

You can help create a better future for mothers and their babies.

Sadly, not all pregnancies go to plan and not all babies are born strong and healthy.

In Australia, almost one in ten babies are born prematurely, which is associated with a higher risk of adverse outcomes*. At Mater this year, about 26 babies will receive life-saving surgery in-utero before they are even born. And up to 79 babies will spend tonight in Mater's Neonatal Critical Care Unit for extra special care after birth.



We believe that every baby born into this world deserves the best possible start to life. And that every moment between a mother and her baby matters.

If you believe this too, we would love to work with you. Perhaps you feel very strongly about supporting care and research for mothers and their babies?

You can help change the future for these women and their little ones by supporting research happening right now at Mater—world-leading research that could give seriously ill and premature babies a better life.

Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, Mater's researchers are already making significant headway in the fight to improve the lives of these babies and their families. But there is still so much to do.

How you can help provide hope today

Mater's world-class research institute—Mater Research—delivers medical and clinical research that translates research findings from 'bench to bedside' as quickly as possible; directly benefiting patients at Mater, across Australia and around the world. Right now, a number of promising and world-leading mother and baby research projects are underway, including:

- ▶ **Protecting preterm babies from disability:** Associate Professor Paul Dawson is hoping to develop a simple, inexpensive treatment to protect preterm babies from adverse neurodevelopmental outcomes. Babies at less than 32 weeks of pregnancy have an increased risk of neurodisability, including cerebral palsy. They have not yet developed the mechanisms to maintain levels of certain nutrients, including sulphate, important for healthy brain growth and development. If a certain protective blood level of sulphate can be identified, it may be possible to keep blood sulphate at a 'safe' level by administering this nutrient after birth.



Assessing asthma in pregnancy: The children of mothers with untreated asthma during pregnancy are more likely to suffer from asthma, allergies and cardiovascular disease. There is also an increased chance of preterm birth, fetal growth restriction and stillbirth. Professor Vicki Clifton's study aims to reduce the number of hospitalisations of pregnant women with asthma. A randomised controlled trial at Mater Mothers' Hospital will determine the effectiveness of antenatal asthma service for improving outcomes for mums with asthma and their babies.

"We hope that the reduction of asthmatic events during pregnancy could also lead to a long-term improvement in the quality of life for children throughout Australia."

Professor Vicki Clifton, Mater Research

Understanding baby heart functions: Very little is known about how a baby's heart functions in the womb. So Mater researcher Alison Lee-Tannock is undertaking a project assessing a number of babies' cardiac function every four weeks, from 20 weeks' gestation. An ultrasound will determine how much blood comes in and out with each beat and how well their hearts are working. It is hoped that screening for heart dysfunction will expand the management options available for high-risk pregnancies, ensuring a more personalised approach for each expectant mum.

Did you know?

Mater proudly opened Queensland's first 24/7 Pregnancy Assessment Centre (PAC) in April 2017 to provide around-the-clock care for any woman who needs help from day one of pregnancy until six weeks after birth. In Australia, as many as one in four women expecting a baby experience complications early in their pregnancy—from 0 to 20 weeks' gestation—including bleeding and other issues. Midwives, nurses and doctors at PAC are specialists in the care of pregnant women and provide care in an environment specifically designed for pregnancy complications at any time of the day or night.



"Knowing there is a specialised facility that's open to everyone 24/7 gives me so much comfort. When it's 2 am in the morning, being able to pick up the phone and talk with a midwife and be reassured and have questions answered is invaluable for any expectant mother."

Tebony, Mater Mothers' Hospital patient.

Please join us in creating a better future

Sadly, there are still many serious health conditions affecting unborn and premature babies—and those people who love and care for them. By helping the ongoing, and long term, investment in research at Mater, you can join the fight to help change the outcomes for these families.

Thank you to all our generous donors who have already supported the work of Mater in creating a better future for mothers and their babies. If you would like to show your support, contact us today and let's start a conversation about how you can be involved.

"Medical research is the single most important tool we have in the fight against serious illness and health conditions."

Professor John Prins, Director, Mater Research

"To be able to find an alternative option where a child may have a better chance with a healthy life, then I think that's worthwhile aiming for."

Dr Glenn Gardener,
Director, Mater Centre for
Maternal Fetal Medicine

Get in touch

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*Source: www.aihw.gov.au

