

Media statement

15 November 2019

SCHHS supporting preemie babies and families

Every year, approximately 27,000 babies in Australia are born too early. Worldwide, more than 15 million infants are born prematurely, and many face serious, lifelong health challenges.

17 November is World Prematurity Day, a globally celebrated day to increase awareness of preterm babies as well as the simple, proven, cost-effective measures that could prevent them.

“This worldwide issue is a huge challenge here in Australia. Chances are you or someone you know has experienced the trauma of having a baby born too soon.” said Neonatal Unit Clinical Director Dr Lizelle Weber.

“At Sunshine Coast University Hospital (SCUH) we’ve cared for 184 premature babies between January and October this year alone.”

“The SCUH Neonatal Unit is proud to be a leader in providing family-centred care, accommodating mothers beside their babies to foster early attachment and enable healthy brain development outside the womb.”

Dr Weber said: “We all have a role to play in the support of these families and improving awareness. Not all risk factors are things that can change but there are some simple measures that can reduce your risk for preterm labour. “

“Getting into a healthy weight range before and during pregnancy, avoiding cigarettes, drugs and alcohol, as well as attending prenatal care can all contribute to a healthy pregnancy,” Dr Weber said.

“Also getting treated for chronic health conditions, ensuring your vaccination status is up to date and following strict hand hygiene to prevent infection can reduce your risk factors.”

Sunshine Coast mum Deb Davies delivered her twin boys David and Matthew at SCUH at 29 weeks in May.

She says nothing can prepare you for the rollercoaster ride of having a premature baby, and she is so thankful she was able to stay on the Sunshine Coast to deliver her sons.

“The medical help we have received locally has been top notch, I couldn’t fault it. We still have to attend a multitude of appointments; the boys are still on oxygen and attend regular check-ups,” Deb said.

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“But the support we have received from our physiotherapist, speech pathologist, nutritionist, neonatologist and the rest is phenomenal. Everyone’s communication has been seamless.”

“It’s made such a difference to our lives to be able to be able to receive this level of care on the Sunshine Coast. Having to travel any amount of distance with twins takes a large amount of preparation and planning for us, so it’s great we can stay close to home,” Deb said.

For more information on World Prematurity Day visit www.miraclebabies.org.au/get-involved/events/world-prematurity-day/

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Interview and photo opportunities will be available with Dr Lizelle Weber and mum Deb Davies.

WHEN: Monday 18 November, 12:30pm

WHERE: Sunshine Coast University Hospital, meet at main reception

ENDS

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