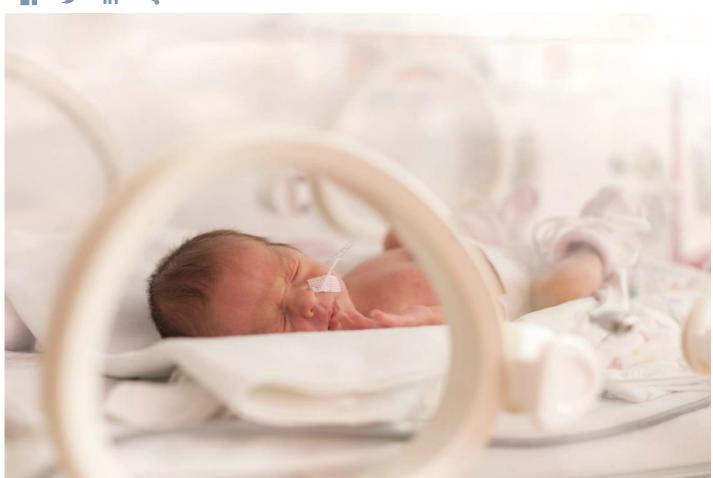# TrophAmine Plays Critical Role In Treating Premature Babies

Columbia University

While full-term infants are born between 38 and 42 weeks of pregnancy, premature babies or "preemies," are born in 37 weeks or less. Due to their lack of development, preemies lack the required body fat to maintain their body temperature, and their organs are not developed enough to function properly on their own. Consequently, premature babies are more susceptible to certain infections and may experience health problems such as anemia, low blood pressure and respiratory problems.

Yet modern scientific breakthroughs have made a big difference in increasing the chances of survival for preemies — by as much as 90 percent for those weighing 800 grams or more. Among the medical discoveries benefiting premature infants is TrophAmine®, developed with National Institutes of Health funding by Drs. Ralph Dell, Robert Winters and William Heird at Columbia University in New York. TrophAmine is sold by the pharmaceutical company B. Braun Medical Inc.

> *Widely used throughout the country, TrophAmine® is an amino acid solution that promotes*

growth in premature babies, and can be administered as early as the first day of life.

Known as "the building blocks of protein," amino acids are essential to growing and breaking down food in the human body. TrophAmine® normalizes plasma amino acid levels so that they're comparable to those of healthy infants who are breast-fed, and it has been clinically proven to match intrauterine growth rates in the third trimester. Additionally, TrophAmine® promotes weight gain as well as positive nitrogen balance, the latter of which indicates that sufficient protein levels are being met.

Given that premature births are increasing in the U.S., occurring at a rate of one in eight babies — roughly 1,000 a day — it's fortunate that TrophAmine® is available to increase their chances of survival.

This story was originally published in 2007.

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