

# **Prostaglandin E<sub>1</sub> (PGE) (Alprostadil)**

## **What is PGE?**

PGE is a chemical compound that a fetus (unborn child) makes. A fetus doesn't necessarily need to use its lungs, so blood can bypass the lungs. Blood bypasses the lungs through the ductus arteriosus. PGE is a compound that keeps this ductus arteriosus open. As the baby nears term and is born, the PGE circulating in the bloodstream falls off and allows the ductus arteriosus to close, forcing blood through the lungs (which is how it's supposed to be).

## **What about PGE as a drug?**

There are some heart conditions where the ductus arteriosus **MUST** stay open. If your baby has one of the heart defects that the ductus arteriosus must stay open, a continuous infusion by IV of the PGE will be started. PGE is sometimes referred to as the drug Alprostadil.

## **How do you know if my baby needs PGE?**

Your baby has probably been brought to the NICU because of questionable heart problems. An ECHO (ultrasound of the heart) will be performed by a Pediatric Cardiologist (heart doctor). If the doctor finds that your baby has this certain type of heart defect, he/she may order an infusion of PGE.

## **How long will my baby need the PGE?**

If the PGE was started because of a certain heart defect, the PGE will need to run until surgery is performed to fix the heart condition.

If you have any further questions, please speak with your baby's doctor.